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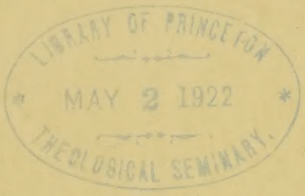

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The mystery of the gentile
dispensation, and the work

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THE MYSTERY

OF

THE GENTILE DISPENSATION,

AND

THE WORK OF THE MESSIAH.

BY

RIDLEY H. HERSCHELL.

"And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."—Dan. vii. 27.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."—Matt. v. 5.

"Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.—Rev. v. 9, 10.

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PREFACE.

THE two following treatises were published in separate papers in a periodical work. This is a disadvantage to them when collected together; as the necessity of each paper having a certain measure of completeness in itself, makes the style occasionally abrupt. This could not be remedied without re-modelling the whole; and I did not conceive the object to be gained by so doing worth the time that would have been expended on it.

I must also crave indulgence for the occasional repetitions that occur. The two subjects are so closely connected, that it is almost impossible to complete a line of argument necessary to the one, without coming on the same ground already touched upon in the other. And I may add, in excuse, that it is so vitally important to the right understanding of Scripture that these two prophetical landmarks, the great and terrible day of the Lord, and the

glory of the latter days, should be distinctly comprehended, and prominently kept in view, that it is well to bestow upon them "line upon line, and precept upon precept."

If I regarded the study of the prophetic Scriptures merely as an amusing speculation, I would not, in these busy days, have occupied any of my time with it. But my firm conviction is, that to those who have already made their calling and election sure, a right understanding of the purposes of God in regard to the coming kingdom of Christ, is the most important object to which they can direct their attention. In this conviction, I earnestly entreat from my Christian readers, their candid and prayerful attention to the following pages; not from any merit in them, but from the great importance of the subject they treat of.

Newnham Street, Edgeware Road,
March, 1848.

THE MYSTERY OF THE GENTILE DISPENSATION.

The evils of tradition have, for some time past, been much pressed upon public attention, and have been justly and successfully exposed. But it may fairly be questioned, whether many of those who are most strenuous in their opposition to traditional rites and ceremonies, are not themselves strongly wedded to traditionary expositions of Scripture; whether it be not, in their eyes, as heretical to differ from Henry or Gill, as it is in the opinion of the Anglo-Catholics, to doubt Apostolic succession, or baptismal regeneration.

In matters of minor importance, it is hardly worth while to interfere with generally-received

explanations; but if we believe that what may be termed the *authorised* expositions, conceal or obscure a truth which the Holy Spirit meant to convey in the text of the Holy Scriptures, it then becomes our duty to express our convictions on the subject, and the reason of these convictions.

The Apostle Paul, in the third chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, speaks to them of a mystery that had been specially revealed to him. "For this cause, I, Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward; how that, by revelation, He made known unto me the mystery, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel; whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto me by the effectual working of His power: unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles

the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Eph. iii. 1—11.)

The arrangement of the words in the English translation, above quoted, seems necessarily to imply, that the mystery revealed to Paul, was: "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel." But it is impossible that this could be the mystery alluded to; because this participation of the Gentiles in the spiritual blessings of Israel was revealed from the very beginning. When God called Abraham, He declared, that in him and in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed; and altered his name from Abram to Abraham, "the father of a multitude," as a sign that all nations should ultimately be added to his own family. This is distinctly recognized by

the same apostle in another of his writings: "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen (or Gentiles) through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying: "In thee shall all nations be blessed." (Gal. iii. 8.) When the covenant was made with Israel in the wilderness, it was equally open to Gentiles. The Passover itself, was as free to Gentile strangers living in the midst of Israel, as to the Israelites themselves. "When a stranger shall sojourn with you, and will keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land; for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is home-born, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you." (Exod. xii. 48, 49.) There are many other passages of this description that I might refer to; but this is sufficient for the purpose for which I have quoted it,—to prove that the covenant of God was open to Gentiles; that a stranger living with Israel, and desiring to become one of them, had only to pass through the ceremony appointed by God, after which, he was admitted into their

number, and became entitled to all the privileges of the children of Israel.

It had been foretold, then, that all nations should be gathered into the family of Abraham; a commandment was subsequently given that strangers, (that is Gentiles,) should be admitted as partakers of the covenant with Israel; and the prophet Isaiah predicted, that the Messiah was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles." This being the case, it is impossible to suppose that a thing so distinctly revealed as that of the Gentiles being "fellow-heirs, and of the same body" with Israel, can be that *mystery* which Paul declares he had made known to him by revelation.

Some commentators, perceiving this, dwell upon the fifth verse, and say that this mystery "in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit:" that is, that though revealed, it was not revealed *as*, or in like manner as, it is now revealed, clearly and explicitly. Without stopping to dwell on what is perfectly obvious, that the revelation concerning the Gentiles is not obscure, but clear and unambiguous, I proceed to the ninth

verse, where it is declared that this mystery, instead of being at first partially revealed, and then more perfectly revealed, had, on the contrary, "from the beginning of the world been hid in God." If a matter is even partially revealed, it can no longer be called hidden.

The explanation of this passage that is most generally received, is, that the mystery of which the apostle speaks, is the admission of the Gentiles into the Church of God without submitting to Jewish rites, which were formerly necessary before they could become partakers of the commonwealth of Israel. There can be no question that this "breaking down the middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile, is a most important truth, and one which the Jews were very slow to learn; not so much, however, on account of its being a hidden mystery, as on account of the veneration in which they held their own ecclesiastical polity. It is true they needed an express revelation, to convince them of this truth; but this revelation was not made to Paul, but to Peter. The vision vouchsafed to Peter, of which we have an account in Acts x., was seen

by him, according to the common chronology, about six years after the conversion of Paul; and we cannot suppose that a similar revelation was made to the latter apostle, either before or after this time. It could not have been made before it, because Paul would never have concealed a Divine communication so important, from the rest of the church; and it is evident the revelation was equally new to Peter, and the believers at large. (See Acts xi.) And it could not have been made after this period; because the knowledge of Peter's vision, and of the fact, that "God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." (Acts xi. 18,) was speedily spread abroad among the disciples. This, therefore, could not be the mystery concerning which the apostle Paul received a special revelation.

Let us examine the other writings of the same apostle, and see whether they throw any more light on the nature of this mystery. In his Epistle to the Romans, in the concluding ascription of praise to the "God only wise," he says; "To him that is of power to establish you according to my Gospel, ('my good message,') and the preaching of Jesus Christ,

according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but is now made manifest." (Rom. xvi. 26.) And again, in 1st Corinthians, ii. 7: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." And in his Epistle to the Colossians, i. 26: "Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints."

I think there can be little doubt that the mystery thus frequently alluded to by the apostle, is one and the same; and that it is neither the participation of the Gentiles in Jewish blessings, nor their admission to these blessings without the performance of Jewish rites. It cannot be the Gospel, or good message of redemption to fallen man through a Saviour; because this, instead of having been hidden, has been the main subject of every revelation, from the fall of man, to the time when the apostle wrote. Neither is it the glorious kingdom of the Messiah; for that is the theme of all the ancient prophets. And yet the mystery is evidently connected with

"the preaching of Jesus Christ," and with a purpose of God, ordained before the world, to the glory of His saints.

In the passage at the commencement of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, above quoted, I am disposed to regard the sixth verse, as one of those parenthetical sentences with which the writings of this apostle so much abound; and that it does not state the fellow-heirship of the Gentiles to be the mystery spoken of; but simply states, that of this glorious mystery they were fellow-heirs and partakers. The words are literally: "The Gentiles to be fellow-heirs:" and I understand the apostle to say, that of this great mystery, which it was his privilege to proclaim among the Gentiles, they were fellow-heirs. What this mystery is, which he was "to make all men see," I believe to be explained by the tenth verse; it is "the church," the "called-out ones" of this dispensation; through which "the manifold wisdom of God" is made known to the "principalities and powers in heavenly places."

This present dispensation of an elect church, anointed to be "kings and priests," and called

out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation," I believe to be the mystery which "was kept secret since the world began;" that "hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world to our glory;" which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints." The ancient prophets gave no hint of any such intermediate dispensation, between the coming of Christ, and the accomplishment of that deliverance which His coming was to effect. They tell us, indeed, that the Redeemer was to be "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" that He was, apparently, to "labour in vain, and spend His strength for nought;" but they never give us to understand that this general rejection was to last for many centuries, and that during this period God was to gather out "the Church of the first-born,"—"the Bride, the Lamb's wife."

The mode in which the prophets announce their predictions is nearly uniform. They usually commence with the description of a time of trouble, called on several occasions, "the great and terrible day of the Lord;"

they then speak of the advent of a deliverer; and then of a period of blessedness consequent upon His advent. To cite all the passages that might be urged in proof of this, would be to transcribe a large portion of the prophetic Scriptures. I shall, however, select a few from the mass, to prove and illustrate the position, that this present dispensation of the elect church, was not revealed to the prophets of old.

In the following quotation, from the ninth Psalm, what may be called the two grand divisions of the subject of prophecy, (for the advent of the deliverer is more frequently implied than expressed,) that is, the terrors of the Lord, and the glory that follows, are given in a small compass. "Thou hast rebuked the heathen, thou hast destroyed the wicked, thou hast put out their name for ever and ever. O thou enemy! destructions are come to a perpetual end; and thou hast destroyed cities; their memorial is perished with them. But the Lord shall endure for ever; He hath prepared His throne for judgment. And He shall judge the world in righteousness, He shall

minister judgment to the people in uprightness. (Psalm ix. 5—8.)

In the seventy-second Psalm, the advent of the Redeemer, and the blessings that follow, are at once entered on, with only a slight reference to the preceding time of trouble. This Psalm, also, is one of the many examples in which the prophet, commencing with the subject nearest his own heart, is led by the Holy Spirit, to speak of matters more distant and more glorious. From the first verse of the Psalm: "Give the king thy judgments, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son:" we cannot doubt that David began this prophetic prayer, with the view of entreating, and then predicting, blessings on the reign of his son Solomon. But the Holy Ghost, by whom the "holy men of old spake," soon led him beyond Solomon to speak of His greater and more glorious Son, even the Messiah, David's Son and Lord. "He shall judge the poor of the people, He shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure; throughout all gene

rations. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In His days shall the righteous flourish and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed." (Psalm lxxii. 4—7, 17.)

Such was the gospel of the Psalmist; the "glad tidings" of "peace on earth, and good-will to men." Let us, now, examine what was the good message of Isaiah, and of the prophets who followed him.

In the tenth chapter of Isaiah, we have the denunciation of heavy judgments; the nearer chastisements on Israel being mixed up with that more distant and more terrible visitation, which is announced by all the prophets. I have only space for the last two verses, which, according to the sequence already noticed, states the season of trouble that precedes the advent of the Messiah, and the time of universal blessing, predicted in the following chapter. "Behold the Lord, the Lord of Hosts shall lop the bough with terror; and the high ones

of statue shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled. And He shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf, also, shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah x. 33, 34; xi. 1, 2, 5—9.)

In Jeremiah, we find the same subjects treated of in the same order; but with this difference, that the time of blessedness is by him so intimately connected with the glory of the Jewish people, that there is little illusion to the other nations of the world. This, indeed, is not peculiar to Jeremiah, but is found in Ezekiel, and other prophets. Since we are told, however, in one of the earliest predictions on the subject, that the blessedness of the nations at large is connected with the blessing of Israel; "Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people, for He will avenge the blood of His servants,—and be merciful unto His land, and to His people:" (Deut. xxxii. 43,) we know that the announcement of the one includes that of the other.

The whole of the thirtieth, thirty-first, and thirty-third chapters of Jeremiah, are occupied with the time of trouble, and the glory that follows. I can only give a few extracts. "Why criest thou for thine affliction? Thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity. Therefore all that devour thee shall be devoured: and all thine adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity: and they that spoil

thee shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon thee, will I give for a prey. Thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will bring again the captivity of Jacob's tents, and have mercy on his dwelling places; and the city shall be builded upon her own heap, and the palace shall remain after the manner thereof. I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and honour, before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them." (Jer. xxx. 15, 16, 18. xxxiii. 7—9.)

My readers must consult for themselves the thirty-fourth, thirty-sixth, and thirty-seventh of Ezekiel; the testimony of which would be mutilated by partial quotations.

In Daniel, the period of glory and blessedness to the earth, is distinctly connected with the advent of the Redeemer. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other

people; bat it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." "I saw in the night, visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him. And there was given Him, dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." (Dan ii. 44, and vii. 13, 14.)

We see from these, and many similar passages of the Old Testament Scriptures, that by the advent of a Redeemer and Deliverer, the world is to be brought out of a state of trouble and confusion, into a condition of peace and blessedness. I shall make a few more extracts relating to the bearing these events have on the condition of the Jewish people.

In the ninth chapter of Isaiah we find at the commencement, that "the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light;" that they rejoice "according to the joy of harvest," because God "hath broken the yoke of their

burden." The immediate cause of this joyful deliverance is stated in v. 6, 7. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God! the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace! Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." The same deliverance is thus spoken of by Jeremiah: "Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him; but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them" (Jer. xxx. 7—9.) And again, Ezekiel: "I will raise up one shepherd over them, even my servant David; and he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my

servant David a prince among them. I, the Lord, have spoken it." "And David, my servant, shall be king over them; and they shall all have one shepherd; they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children, for ever; and my servant David shall be their prince for ever." (Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. xxxvii. 24, 25.) And what said the angel to Mary, concerning that wonderful child she was to bring forth? "He shall be great, and shall be called the son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke i. 32, 33.) And the aged Simeon and Anna recognised in our Lord, while yet a helpless infant, that "salvation," or Saviour, for whom they, and all "that looked for redemption in Jeruselem," had anxiously waited.

Now, taking all these declarations of the Spirit of God into consideration, I really can-

not sympathize in the strong condemnation so generally passed on the "carnal Jewish notions" of the apostles, when they inquired of our Lord: "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel?" I think the question, and the expectation that prompted it, were perfectly scriptural. The glory of the Jewish nation is always associated with the advent of Messiah, and the glory and blessedness of the latter days: the same prophecy that records Jerusalem's overthrow and desolation, also declares its subsequent exaltation: "And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem." (Micah iv. 8.) If they believed these utterances of Micah to be the words of God, was there anything wonderful, or anything foolish, in their asking our Lord Jesus Christ, if they were to be fulfilled now? In His reply He tells them that the time for the full understanding of these prophetic declarations was not yet come; but that they should ere long receive a supernatural enlightenment, and enter on a ministry of witness. "And he said unto them, It is not for

you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts i. 7, 8.) When they were thus divinely illumined, when the Holy Spirit took of that which was Christ's, and shewed it unto them, they then began to understand the Scriptures. The unconverted Jew of the present day, when he has cast Rabbinical absurdities from him, and has not become a deist, reads the Old Testament with the same views the apostles entertained before they were enlightened by the Holy Spirit; and therefore he says: "I cannot believe the Messiah has come, because I find none of the prophecies accomplished that were to accompany or follow his coming. Israel is not delivered, and the world is not in a state of peace and blessedness." The answer to this objection has usually been, that all these predictions have spiritually fulfilled. If this hypothesis of a spiritual fulfilment meant nothing more, than that wherever the gospel of Christ is received into the

heart, it delivers both Jew and Gentile from the bondage of sin, and places them in a state of internal peace and happiness, no objection would be made to this spiritual fulfilment. But to present this as a substitute for the true and actual fulfilment of these prophecies, has occasioned, on the part of really good men, as great perversions of scripture as those of the boldest infidels; less dangerous in their consequences, it is true; but equally wide of the meaning of the Spirit of God. That this has been the cause of much stumbling to the Jews, there can be no question; such explaining away of the most solemn declarations of God,—promises which He declares cannot be broken, unless men can break His covenant with day and with night,—(Jer. xxxiii, 20, 21, 25, 26.) is sufficient to impress the Jew, (who has an instinctive reverence for the Divine word, even when he does not obey it,) with the belief that there is something false and hollow about the Christian system, since it thus tampers with that which he knows to be of God.

It is perfectly evident that the subject which chiefly occupies the prophetic Scriptures of the Old Testament is the glory that was to follow

the advent of the Messiah. There are, it is true distinct intimations of "His coming in humility; of His being despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs;" but it is not until we are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, that we see the full development of this "dispensation of humility" into which our Lord first entered, and into which His Church must follow Him. This, "in other ages, was not made known unto the sons of men;" and it is still hidden from the Jews who believe not in that further revelation of God's will which came by Jesus Christ; who, "having received gifts for men," shed forth the gift of the Holy Spirit on His disciples, to guide them into all truth. Under the teaching of this Heavenly Guide, we perceive, how that which at first seems but a feature of individual character, expands into the characteristic of a dispensation. We see that previous to the time when Christ is to be "a great King over all the earth," He is to be the leader and commander of a chosen band, who are to follow in the footsteps of His humiliation, to be "planted in the likeness of His death," and "buried with him in baptism."

This chosen band, this Church, is to be, like its leader, "despised and rejected of men;" it is to be "hated of all nations;" in the world it is to have tribulation: it is to be in this dispensation as unlike the glorious Church of the prophets, as its Leader, at His advent in humility, was unlike the mighty Conqueror predicted by them, who was to subdue all things under His feet.

Those who consider the nationality of the Jewish people destroyed for ever, apply all the glorious predictions of the prophets, concerning the latter days, exclusively to the Church of Christ; while we, who believe that in the letter it refers to the Jewish nation, firmly believe that the Church will not only participate in that glory, but will even be exalted to a higher glory. These predictions are, therefore, in a measure, common ground to both parties. Let us examine together the features of this glorious Church. What peace, what blessedness, what world-wide dominion, is promised to it! All nations shall flow unto it; kings shall minister unto it: its oppressors shall come bending unto it; they that despised it shall bow down at the soles of its feet; it shall be "an eternal excel-

lency, a joy of many generations!" All that is glorious and beautiful in the creation is resorted to, in order to picture to man's imagination its beauty and glory; the silver, the gold, the precious stones; the pine, the myrtle, and fruit-trees with unfading leaves: pure streams of living waters, a sun that is never withdrawn, and a "glory of the Lord," far above the brightness of that sun! We see that the greatness of his subject, far exceeds the prophet's powers of expression: He pictures the glorious vision as well as human language enables him to do; but how weak is language to convey an idea of a glory that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard!" Thus much concerning it, however, is very plain; it is not the description of a spiritual glory, merely, but of an outward and visible glory: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together;" (Isa. xl. 5.) and in the latter days "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills." (Isa. ii. 2.) It is to be seen and known, honored and resorted to, by all the intelligent creatures of God.

Now there are some features of the Church,

in the present dispensation, that bear a measure of resemblance to those of the glorious Church. Even in its humiliation, the Church is to be "the light of the world;" a "city set on a hill." The world is to recognise it as something different from itself. But is the world to flow to it? Are the men of the world to say: "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths?" (Isa. ii. 3.) No; the world is to hate the Church, even as it hated the Church's Lord: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me, before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John xv. 18, 19.) Is it to enjoy outward quiet and prosperity; the abundance of peace extended to it like a river, "and the glory of the nations, like a flowing stream?" No: in the world it shall have tribulation; its members shall be persecuted, reviled, shall have all manner of evil spoken against them falsely, for Christ's sake. The world shall know them not, because it

knew not Christ; shall hate them, because they do not belong to it. Shall it be said that all these declarations have reference only to the believers of the first age? Nay; the same prayer of our blessed Lord which testified the world's hatred of them, was uttered "not for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on" Christ "through their word." (John xvii. 20.) But is not the humiliation of the Church but for a season? Is there not a period coming when all that the prophets have spoken of her glory shall be accomplished? Yes, the day of her glory will come; her humiliation is but for a season; but I find nowhere in the revelation of God a termination to this season, previous to the termination of this dispensation. I find that the latter days of this dispensation, instead of being times of peace, holiness, and spiritual prosperity, are to be "perilous times;" in which "men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of

God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." (2 Tim. iii. 1—5.) I find that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived;" (Ibid. v. 13.) that "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold;" so that it shall be a question whether the Son of man, when He cometh, shall "find faith on the earth." "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying: Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage. But beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts." (Jude 14—18.)

So far, then, is it from being the case, that the world is gradually to slide into the Church, until it be entirely absorbed in it, that we find the wickedness of the world is to be most rampant, and its oppression of the children of God, most grievous, at the time when Christ comes to deliver His Church. While the prophets of old, overleaping this present dispensation, which "was not made known unto" them, and their predictions with visions of peace and joy, the prophecies of our Lord and His apostles, which chiefly concern the dispensation, conclude with "distress of nations, with perplexity," war, famine, and pestilence; "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth." (Luke xxi. 26.) And the Church, instead of being dismayed at these things, is to regard them as the harbingers of her time of rest: "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke xxi. 28.)

There is a certain feeling of awkwardness when a Jew speaks of the glorious promises made to his nation, arising from the knowledge that a great majority of Christians are ready

on hearing him, to raise an outcry about "Jewish pride," and "carnal notions of an earthly kingdom." If this be a portion of the "reproach and byword" that must be borne, then it must be endured patiently; but I can declare with all honesty, that no one is more fully convinced than I am, that, instead of pride, to us, as a nation, "belongeth confusion of face;" and that the love of God which yet rests upon the Jews is "for the fathers' sakes." But whether I be thus reproached or not, I must state the truth of God as it is.

It must be very clear to every diligent reader of the Old Testament, that the main, nay, the almost exclusive subject of it, is the Jewish nation. With the exception of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, which are a collection of general maxims, and the book of Job, and the first twelve chapters of Genesis, which relate to a period anterior to the existence of the Jews as a nation, the whole of this Divine revelation is occupied with the origin, the history, and the future destiny of this people. Other nations, indeed, are mentioned; but it is either in a slight and cursory manner, or it is on account of their direct connexion with

Israel. If any one is disposed to be startled at this statement, let him simply cast his eye over the list of the books into which the Old Testament is divided. What do the five books of Moses contain, but the origin and early records of this people? What is the subject-matter from Joshua to Esther inclusive, but the history of this people? And what did the visions beheld by the prophets relate to, but the destiny of this people? Much of what was once prophecy, has now become history; but the final promises remain to be accomplished, as a test of the faithfulness of Him who hath said: "If ye can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, that there should not be day and night in their season, then may also my covenant be broken with David my servant, that he should not have a son to reign upon his throne." (Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21.)

That the Jews should occupy this prominent position in the Divine revelations of God, appears less wonderful when we consider, that to them, and to them only, "were committed the oracles of God." That which was entrusted to their care, contained what they were most concerned to know, and what they were most

interested to preserve the record of. If God in His mysterious wisdom chose one nation to be the recipient and depositary of His communications, it is not surprising that the substance of these communications should have a direct connection with that nation. But if it be granted that this is the case, and I think it can hardly be denied, then it must be admitted that a due consideration of this fact is absolutely necessary to the right understanding of that Divine communication. If the past and future history of the Jews be the subject of a revelation under our consideration, we can hardly be expected to understand this revelation aright if we leave the Jews entirely out of view, and read it under the impression that it refers to a different subject. Yet this has been a very common error. A familiar example of it may be seen in the headings of the chapters and pages of the authorised English version of the Bible. The careful reader will find many extraordinary statements in these *authorised* comments on the word of God; I shall content myself with citing one; the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah. If there could be any doubt as to its relating to the Jewish

nation, the third verse would settle the question: "Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." But what is the heading of this chapter in the authorised version? "The prophet, for the comfort of the Gentiles, prophesieth the amplitude of their church, their safety, their certain deliverance out of affliction, their fair edification and their sure preservation." Can we wonder that a Jew, on reading this, should believe what his brethren tell him, that the Gentiles have falsified and corrupted their translation of the Old Testament?*

Two very opposite, yet equally erroneous courses have been pursued in regard to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The German expositors of the Neologian school, whose

* The excellent Dr. Watts is very ingenious in this species of transmutation. In translating Psalm xlv. he renders ver. 9, as follows:

"Behold at Thy right hand,
The Gentile Church is seen."

And in Psalm lxix. ver. 8, he says:

"Amongst my brethren and the Jews,
I like a stranger stood;
And bore their vile reproach to bring
The Gentiles near to God."

critical acumen leads them distinctly to perceive that it is, as I have stated, a history of the Jews, and who conceive that the history of the Jews closed with their dispersion, and that they exist no longer as a nation, but merely as a religious sect, these expositors naturally look on the Old Testament as a mere record of by-gone events: of no farther use to us than any other authentic record of past history. The orthodox divines, in Britain and elsewhere, believing with the Jews, that the Old Testament is the inspired word of God, but in general agreeing with the divines above mentioned, that the Jewish national history is at an end,* are driven to interpret of the Christian church, all those passages that will not fit into the past history of the Jews. So long as we confine our quotations to single verses, this may often be done without violence; because what the Lord says to comfort His chosen nation, may be equally applicable either to individuals or communities in like

* I am aware that the Rev. Thomas Scott, and some others, have seen the literal restoration of the Jews; but these are exceptions to the general rule.

circumstances. Take the following often quoted verse as an example: "To comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." This may with propriety be applied either to a lonely afflicted saint, or to the Christian church, or to any portion of that church. But let us go on with the context, and see what the Christian church has to do with it. "And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen and your vine-dressers." (Isaiah lxi. 2—5.) Again: the latter part of the forty-ninth of Isaiah: "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers," &c., is applied to the Christian church in the latter days. The heading of the chapter in the authorised version may be considered a fair epitome of the views of commen-

tators: "Christ being sent to the Jews, complaineth of them: He is sent to the Gentiles with gracious promises: God's love is perpetual to His church. The ample restoration of the church: The powerful deliverance out of captivity." But it is very evident that chapters l. and li. are a continuation of the same subject treated of in chap. xlix. What then is the Christian church to make of the following verse? "Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? Or which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you?" (Isa. l. 1.) Being unable to fit this upon the church, the commentators kindly give it to the Jews; and so the whole prophetic scriptures are interpreted upon a see-saw principle; the curses and denunciations being allotted to the Jews, the blessings and glorious promises to the Christian church.

The evils of this mode of interpretation are manifold. The word of prophecy, instead of being as the Holy Spirit calls it by the mouth of Peter, a "sure word," becomes a mass of confusion and uncertainty; instead of being a bright and steady "light that shineth in a dark place," to which we "do well to take

heed," it is but the fitful aurora borealis; brilliant and beautiful, indeed, but incapable of guiding the traveller through the dark and gloomy night.

I am not maintaining the absurd proposition that the Old Testament is addressed to Jews only. It is a revelation to mankind; but it was to be administered through the Jews to the rest of the world. They were to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." The face of God was to shine on them, not that the other nations might be in darkness, but that His "way might be known upon earth, His saving health among all nations."* (Psalm lxvii. 1, 2.) It was their Messiah, who was to be the deliverer of mankind; it was a Prophet from the midst of them, of their brethren (Deut. xviii. 15, 18), who was to be "the Redeemer of the world." These are statements no one will call in question; because, though they were once only prophecy, they have now become history. But before this had become history, there were prophecies of

* This mission they have as yet but partially fulfilled, by the preaching of the apostles and early disciples of Christ.

a different kind extant concerning the Jews. Even before they had entered the promised land, their expulsion from it, and dispersion among all nations, were clearly predicted; and when they were living in the land, in comparative peace and prosperity, the same predictions were announced by the later prophets. These prophecies have also become history. And now I come to the point to which I wish to bring my readers: If every thing spoken in the Old Testament scriptures concerning the Jews, has been literally fulfilled in and by the Jews, shall not all the remainder of that which is said concerning them, be literally fulfilled, in and by them? Was ever ancient writing, interpreted upon the principle, that the beginning and middle of a continuous discourse, referred to one matter; and the end of it, without any break, or hint of a change of subject, referred to a totally different matter? Yet this is what is done by a large portion of the Christian church in regard to the prophetic scriptures of the Old Testament; thereby jumbling past, present, and future, into one mass of inextricable confusion.

When conversing on the subject of the Old

Testament prophecies, I have sometimes been met by the cavil (for *argument* it certainly cannot be called), that it signifies very little whether we understand these prophecies to relate to the Jews, or to the Christian church: "We all admit," it is said, "that there is to be a latter-day glory to the Church, and that the Jews, as well as the heathens, are to be converted to the gospel of Christ: therefore they will necessarily share in that glory." Now, though I consider this language inconsistent with the respect we should pay to "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,"—though it is virtually saying, that it matters not whether we ascertain the meaning of the Holy Spirit, or put our own construction upon His words, yet, for the sake of argument, I will admit that this may be satisfactory to Gentile readers of scripture. But how is the unconverted Jew to receive this? If you wish him to receive the New Testament as the word of God, you must convince him that, while it explains, it does not contradict, the Old Testament; and you must beware of leading him to suppose that it compels you to wrest the Old Testament scriptures from their

plain and obvious meaning. If you tell him that Jew means Christian, and Zion the Church, and Palestine, heaven, he will have no great difficulty in rebutting all your arguments from the Old Testament, that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah.

At the present time, when there is a sincere and anxious desire on the part of many Christians, to bring Jews to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, it is of the utmost importance that the nature of the present, and of the coming, dispensation, should be distinctly understood; that those who seek to instruct the Jews should be able to "take the stumbling-blocks out of the way;" and to answer those difficulties that naturally arise, from the present state of the world, and of the Jews, being so different from that which was stated to ensue from the Redeemer's advent. "In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is His name whereby He shall be called: The Lord our righteousness." (Jer. xxiii. 6.) Judah is not saved, but is yet groaning under the oppression of the nations; Israel does not dwell safely, but is driven out, no one knows whither; therefore, says the

Jew, I do not acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth to be the Lord our righteousness. Now, none of those strange contortions of scripture, falsely called spiritualising systems, can give any answer to this, that is at all satisfactory to the mind of a thinking and educated Jew. There is but one answer to it; and this is: That in the later revelations made by God to man, of which we have the record in the New Testament, a farther development of the history of mankind was made known, even the mystery of the Gentile dispensation, which was to intervene between the coming of Christ in humility, and His coming "in power and great glory, to take unto Himself His great power and reign. As David, after he was anointed king of Israel, wandered about as a fugitive, rejected by the nation whose lawful king he was, and enthroned only in the hearts of a small chosen band, so Jesus Christ, the son of David, though anointed King over the whole earth, is still rejected by the nations of the world, and reigns only over a little band, His church; who, as they now "suffer with Him," shall, in due time, "reign with Him;" when

"the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ."

I believe most attentive students of scripture have been conscious at some periods of their inquiries into Divine truth, of a certain difficulty and confusion in their minds, arising from the apparently antagonist principles of universality and limitation that are to be met with in various parts of scripture. These seeming inconsistencies can only be reconciled by a right view of the gradual development of God's plan for the recovery of fallen man. From the fall of Adam, to the present time, God has dealt with men in the way of election; in His providential and gracious dealings, He has ever chosen but a portion out of the mass, to whom truth, or light, or civilisation, should be communicated. I am not here entering on the doctrine of election as set forth by theologians; I mention it simply as a fact in the history of mankind. From the revelations of the New Testament scriptures, it is evident this mode of manifestation to an election only, is to continue to the end of this dispensation. The world is the mass; the church but a portion taken out

of the mass. But the Old Testament prophets, as I have already remarked, overleap this dispensation, and speak of the time when the redemption wrought out by Christ shall be manifested, not in the few, but in the many; when to Him, "every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear;" (Isa. xlv. 23) when "all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him" (Psalm lxxii. 11); when the "people shall be all righteous" (Isa. lx. 21); and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi. 9.)

Let us examine more in detail the seemingly incompatible statements made in different parts of the scriptures respecting the limitation and the universality of Christ's disciples. "All nations shall call Him blessed:" "The heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth His glory." And yet, "many are called, but few are chosen;" and it is a "little flock" to whom it is the Father's "good pleasure to give the kingdom." The popular notion of the gradual increase of the Church by the preaching of the gospel, until it is all church, and no more world, affords no solution

of this difficulty. If this present dispensation is to expand into the millenium, how can it be said with any truth that there are *few* chosen? Who, in this case, are the "little flock;" and what becomes of this little flock? Not only does the popular view give us no solution of this difficulty, but it plunges us into many others. It delays the second coming of the Lord until after the time when "all nations shall serve Him;" yet strange to say, when he does come, it is not all nations whom He is to gather, but only "His elect from the four winds!" "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. i. 11). "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken: and then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and

great glory.—Take heed to yourselves lest that day come upon you unawares: for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." (Luke xxi. 25—27, 34, 35.) "The day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night; for when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. v. 2, 3.) What! is this sudden destruction to come on a converted world, offering incense unto the Lord? Is this terrible judgment to come as a snare on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth, at a time when in every place a pure offering is offered in the name of the Lord? If the Lord Jesus comes to a converted world, who are they whose hearts faint with fear? Not His saints; for they are to look up, and lift up their heads, because their redemption draweth nigh.

I might fill many pages with similar contradictions; but these may suffice to show, that it is a vain attempt to fit the glorious predictions concerning the latter days, upon this present dispensation of the Church's humility: that it is an attempt equally vain, to accom-

modate the universality of the millenial dispensation, to the essentially limited nature of a dispensation that consists of a *Church*, a body of *called-out* ones, an *election* out of the mass. If it be an election, it cannot be universal; if it be universal, then there is no more Church, or election. In this dispensation, it is the church, the election alone, that are saved from wrath, and made partakers of Christ's glory; but a period is coming when the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord; therefore the dispensation of election, which concludes when Christ gathers His elect, cannot be the conclusion of this earth's history; and a dispensation must wait her after this, when "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

An attentive consideration of what is said concerning the children of God in scripture, and which daily experience proves to be true in this present dispensation, will show how inapplicable the given characteristics are to the millenial dispensation. They are represented as a despised and afflicted people, struggling against the might of an opposing and oppressing world; all around them dark and gloomy,

so that they must walk by faith, not by sight; they are exhorted not to look at the things that are seen, but at the unseen realities reserved in heaven, and "ready to be revealed in the last time." But how can any of these things be said of the children of God in the millenial dispensation? Even those who are disposed to take the lowest view of that state—who look upon it as little more than a respectable, church-going, world—must at least admit that this world will have left off its active opposition to the gospel, that its laws and customs must be fashioned according to the doctrine of Christ; and where, then, is the oppression and outward affliction of the saints to come from? "The friendship of the world is enmity with God." Shall this be true in the millenium? I can find no promise to the saints, of a gradual amelioration of their condition; no hint that what was true concerning it when the apostles wrote, what is true at the present day, and has been invariably true from that time to this, is to become less and less applicable to their condition, until it ceases to be applicable at all. I find one distinct epoch held out to the saints as the termination of their troubled and afflicted

state; and this is "The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ." "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it until he receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient, stablish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." (James v. 7, 8.)

I have submitted to my readers my reasons for believing that this dispensation in which God has been pleased to "visit the Gentiles to take *out of them* a people for His name," before He returns to "build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down," is the mystery alluded to by Paul, which God made known to him by revelation. But there is a feature of the mystery which we must now contemplate: "The riches of the glory of this mystery." (Col. i. 27.) How can the dispensation of the Church's humiliation be glorious? What glory is there in the delay of the blessings promised at the advent of Christ—in the prolongation of a reign of wickedness, instead of the immediate commencement of a reign of righteousness? I believe there is much glory in it that we cannot at present comprehend;

but the reason assigned by the Spirit of God gives us to see, that by this dispensation of the Church struggling and fighting against sin and satan, and the world's allurements, great glory is brought to Him to whom alone honor and glory are due: "To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. iii. 9, 10.)

This church, this election, therefore, is to reveal to principalities and powers in heavenly places, new discoveries of the manifold wisdom of their Almighty Creator. Had man never fallen, they could not have known the abundant mercy of God; had the restitution immediately followed the fall, they could not have known the manifold power and wisdom by which He can enable a poor fallen mortal to live "as seeing Him who is invisible;" to renounce and deny his natural inclinations, to resist the allurements of present good, and subsist on the hope of things "not seen as yet." But besides

the instruction drawn from the individual members of this election, God has revealed a glorious purpose in connexion with the church collectively, which not only now, but "in the ages to come" will "show the exceeding riches of his grace." (Eph. ii. 7.) The mighty God, the Lord of all creation, gave to Adam the lordship of this world, which dominion he forfeited by sin. But the gift has not been recalled from man. Christ, the second Adam, has regained the lost dominion; has formally received the lordship of this earth, although He has not yet been actually installed into the possession of it. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Psalm ii. 8.) "And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him." (Dan. vii. 14.) But is He to reign alone in this kingdom? Are none to share the glory of this sovereignty with Him? Yes; He Himself tells us there are. "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." (Luke xxii. 29.) "And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom

under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the most High." (Dan. vii. 27.) His church, His chosen people, are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." (Rom. viii. 17.) "If we suffer, we shall also reign, with Him." (2 Tim. ii. 12.)

Now these clear and explicit promises made to the saints of God that they shall *reign*, that they shall possess a *kingdom*, that they are joint heirs with Christ in the possession and administration of that glorious inheritance, of which they have now only an "earnest," until "the redemption of the purchased possession," (Eph. i. 14), these consistent and oft-repeated statements are surely something more than a mere figurative way of saying that the saints are to be happy in a future state. If it be a figure, is there not some reason for the adoption of this figure? Is it not meant to convey an idea something analogous to the expressions made use of? And yet dominion and happiness are by no means so closely allied in this world, as to render the possession of a kingdom a natural mode of simply expressing a happy futurity. Is it not important to inquire into

what may be the meaning of the Spirit in constantly adopting this figure?

We find in scripture a wonderful harmony on this subject. The home of man, in his unfallen state, was this earth; and throughout the Bible we hear of no other home for him in his renovated and resurrection state, than one either on the earth, or at least very near it. The notion of going away to dwell in some distant and unknown region, wherever it may have been obtained, is certainly not derived from the word of God. The testimony invariably borne there, is, that the earth is to be cleansed and renewed; and thus rendered a fit habitation for the righteous. Observe the harmony of the following scriptures:—

In Proverbs ii. the wise man, after warning his son against soul-destroying sins, urges this as the motive. "For the upright shall dwell in the land, (ארץ, earth) and the perfect shall remain in it: But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it." (Prov. ii. 21, 22.) "Fret not thyself because of evil doers; for they shall be cut down like the grass. For evil doers

shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Psalm xxxvii. 1, 2, 9—11.) "Blessed are the meek," said our Lord, "for they shall inherit the earth." (Matt. v. 5.) "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. xiii. 41, 43.) "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev. xi. 15.) "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven: ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ: (our house which is from heaven, ἐξ οὐρανοῦ.) And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying: Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself, shall be with them, and be their God." (Rev.

xxi. 2, 3.) "Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 9, 10.) "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

What shall we say to this chain of evidence? Shall we insist that the Holy Spirit cannot mean what He says, because *matter* is essentially unholy? Surely matter was not unholy, when God at the first pronounced it, "very good?" Surely it was not unholy in the risen body of our Lord, which Thomas could touch and feel. And surely it will not be unholy, when God, according to His promise, makes "all things new,"—"new heavens and a new earth." Why, then, insist, that when the word of God says *earth*, it always means a certain unknown region, to which we choose to give the name of *heaven?*

Many pious persons shrink from the notion of the saints returning to this earth, because they associate with it the idea of a return to the low and grovelling pursuits of this present life. But our Lord answers this objection: "They which shall be accounted worthy to

obtain that world (*αἰῶνος age, dispensation*), and the resurrection from the dead (*τῆς ἐκ νεκρῶν out of*, or *from among* the dead, *i. e.*, the first resurrection), are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." (Luke xx. 35, 36.) Earthly cares, and relationships, and affections, they return not again to engage in; they return to reign with Christ. We ought not to reject what is revealed, because a great many details have not been revealed. A glorious vision was given to John of "the New Jerusalem," or abode of the risen saints; but its precise locality, whether upon earth, or above the earth, is not stated. Yet we learn that it is in close connexion with the earth; because "the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." (Rev. xxi. 24.)

This earth has been rightly called a revolted province of God's empire. The eternal Son of God, has, by a wonderful work of redemption, gained back this revolted province, and claims it as His peculiar kingdom. But its inhabitants are still in a state of rebellion against the Divine

laws: "We see not yet all things put under" Christ. Wickedness still prevails; the earth is still under the curse; war, and famine, and pestilence, the prevalence of sickness, sorrow, and death, still attest that "the throne of God and of the Lamb," is not yet set up therein. The sure word of promise tells us, however, that God "hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained." (Acts xvii. 31.) But while "a king shall reign in righteousness," it is also decreed that "princes shall rule in judgment." (Isaiah xxxii. 1.) And who are these princes that shall share with the true Melchizedek, the "King of righteousness," and "priest upon His throne," the government and dominion of a regenerated world? Are they angels and archangels,—the highest of those unfallen intelligences "who excel in strength," who have ever done "His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word?" No: The glorious riches of the mystery of this present dispensation, consists in this: That out of those very rebels and enemies, God is, by His almighty power and love, training "a royal priesthood" to

share in the honours of His Son's kingdom; out of these weak and fallen sinners, these "babes and sucklings," has He "ordained strength because of His enemies, that He might still the enemy and the avenger." (Psalm viii. 2.) The enemy who sought to mar the work of creation, who apparently succeeded in marring it, (I may add, who *has* marred it, if it is never again to be "very good,") shall be foiled by his own weapons—shall be bruised under the feet of those whom he thought to enslave, through the glorious redemption wrought by Him, who "was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death," "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." (Heb. ii. 9, 14.) If it were a mighty work of omnipotence, out of stones to raise up children to Abraham, surely it is a yet more glorious work of love, to raise up children of God from among rebellious sinners: to adopt them into the royal family of heaven—to make them "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ!" "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" "Now are we

the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." (1 John iii. 1, 2.) "The manifestation of the sons of God," is an event yet future, for which the creation waiteth with "earnest expectation." As Jesus was openly declared to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead, (Rom. i. 4) so our manifestation as sons of God shall be when we are raised from the dead, and thus shown to be "the children of the resurrection." (Luke xx. 36.) Christ assumes not the government of His kingdom, until those He has ordained to share it with Him, are all trained and prepared for that glorious work, by which, throughout "the ages to come," they will show forth the exceeding riches of the grace of God. For this period "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Rom. viii. 22, 23.) Then the earth, that was cursed for man's sake, is delivered from the curse, through "the second man, the Lord from heaven;" (1 Cor. xv. 47.)

"And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it." (Rev. xxii. 3.) Then shall all these glorious predictions which the prophets connected with the advent of the Redeemer, be fulfilled; man shall glorify God instead of dishonouring him; the will of God shall be done on earth as it is in the heavens. From the throne of God and of the Lamb, a healing power shall go forth to all the nations; and in the administration of this "health and cure," the glorified saints, the church, the bride of Christ, shall share with her King and Lord. Then shall the "good matter, touching the King," indited by the heart of the royal psalmist (Psalm xlv.) receive its accomplishment; the time shall then come "when the saints possess the kingdom;" and shall reign with Christ over a renovated and a happy world.

And this scriptural view of the future, is what some men call a low and carnal idea of the blessedness the saints are to enjoy hereafter! Is it a carnal notion of happiness to say, that we shall not only be "ever with the Lord," but that we shall be ever associated with Him in the glorious work of executing

those purposes of mercy, that are yet in store for a fallen, a sinful, a miserable, world? Do we now rejoice in spirit with Christ, when one sinner is brought to repentance; and shall it not be infinite joy to us to exult with Him over whole nations brought to bow the knee to Him? If we now rejoice in being fellow-workers with Him in bringing "one of a city, and two of a family" out of darkness into His marvellous light, and from the power of Satan, into His kingdom, what will it be to co-operate with Him in bringing a world into loving subjection to Him! Surely with such a prospect before us, each one of us may say with Paul: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." (Rom. viii. 13.) Shall we say that a definite object like that of reigning with Christ, and sharing with Him in those pleasures of which we have a slight foretaste here, when our fellow-sinners are brought to the knowledge of God, is less influential, as a "hope set before us," than the notion of "a lofty, aerial region, where the inmates float in ether, or are mysteriously suspended upon nothing; — where every ves-

tige of materialism is done away, and nothing left but certain unearthly scenes, that have no power of allurement, and certain unearthly ecstacies with which it is felt impossible to sympathise?"* I believe it is the universal testimony of all who entertain the expectation, that "looking for that blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ," (Titus ii. 13.) is a motive to self-denial, to renunciation of the allurements of this present evil world, to devotedness to the service of God, the mighty power of which, they never could have conceived without having experienced it. It is indeed a faith which "overcomes the world." We walk as strangers and pilgrims upon earth during this dispensation, in which it is under the dominion of Him who is called "the prince of this world;" because "our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

* Chalmers.

This glorious work of the Triune God, in calling out and educating the partners of Christ's throne and kingdom, I conceive to be the mystery that was revealed to Paul: a work which now makes known the manifold wisdom of God unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places; and which, in "the ages to come," will manifest to them the riches of His grace. Before concluding this brief and imperfect sketch of a glorious subject, I must state, that though there is a sense in which the Gentile dispensation is new, yet it is, in reality, only a prolongation of that dispensation of election which subsists from the fall of man to the second coming of Christ. Those who "saw the promises afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth," (Heb. xi. 13.) "the church in the wilderness," (Acts vii. 38.) form a portion of the one true church or election, that is the "bride, the Lamb's wife." That which was *new* in the Gentile dispensation, was its interpolation, if I may so call it, between the Jewish dispensation and that universal dispensation announced by all the prophets as following

the advent of the Redeemer; and the "glory of this mystery," is the high and blessed destination of this Church or election in the ages to come, "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men." This is, "the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory;" (1 Cor. ii. 7.) "the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began;" (Rom. xvi. 26.) "even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints." (Col. i. 26.) In the contemplation of this "exceeding weight of glory," which our kinsman Redeemer has wrought out of the ruins of the fall, may we not justly exclaim: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! — For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: To whom be glory for ever. Amen." (Rom. xi. 33, 36.)

THE

WORK OF THE MESSIAH.

THE WORK OF THE MESSIAH.

So much has already been written on the person and work of the Messiah, that it may appear presumptuous again to take up a subject already so often handled by able and learned men. These works may be divided into two classes; those addressed to Jews, which have been chiefly occupied in proving Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah promised to their fathers; and those addressed to Gentiles, the subject of which has generally been the vicarious atonement of Christ for sin, and the consequent pardon and acceptance of those who believe on Him. The mode in which I propose to consider the subject takes a wider range, including not only the deliverance of the Jews, and the justification of believers, but

the redemption of creation from the curse; thus embracing the whole work of Messiah as "the Saviour of the world" (1st John iv. 14), when He delivers creation "from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom. viii. 21.)

In prosecuting the inquiry of what the scriptures say on this important and interesting subject, I shall endeavour so to treat it, as to make it available for the instruction of my brethren the Jews, as well as interesting to Christian students of prophecy.

The disclosures made at the second Assembly of Rabbis, of the notions entertained by educated Jews in regard to the doctrine of the Messiah, exhibit one of those strange anomalies in the history of the human mind, the existence of which we could never have supposed to be possible, if experience had not shown us that it does exist. A transition state of doubt, in the progress from unbelief to faith, is natural and reasonable; but a settled habit of mind, of which we know not whether to say that it is neither faith nor unbelief, or that it is a compound of these seemingly incompatible qualities, is a state which, *a priori*, we could

never have conjectured. Yet the history of mankind in all ages has displayed instances of this strange and anomalous condition, especially in matters connected with religion. A more striking illustration of it cannot well be imagined than the debate of the Rabbis above alluded to on the doctrine of the Messiah. "The idea of the Messiah is the centre point of Judaism." "Judaism does not consist merely in Monotheism; the Messiah idea is one of its most important elements." "As revelation is the foundation, the doctrine of the Messiah is the top-stone of Judaism." Should we not, then, expect this important idea to stand out, clear and well-defined, in the mind of every Jew? Could we suppose it to be as vague and indeterminate as the imaginary pictures formed by the passing clouds, where that which seems to one of the fanciful gazers to be a castle, appears to the others as a ship? Yet so it is. "As various notions are formed regarding the Messiah, so much the more general must the expressions in the prayers be, in order that each individual may attach his own convictions to it." "The future is uncertain; every one

may form his own opinion about it without injury to the present time. There ought, therefore, to be no defined idea of the Messiah in the prayer-book, but only a general idea, so expressed that those of all opinions may coincide in it."*

Recognising the existence of the contradictory state of mind above alluded to, we can still give the authors of those statements credit for honesty; that is, we can suppose it possible that they believe—or, at least, *imagine* they believe—their own absurd declarations. But that such sentiments are a virtual denial of Divine revelation,—are tantamount to a complete renunciation of the authority of the Holy Scriptures, must be evident to every unprejudiced mind. No one who has a settled belief that the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, are a revelation of the mind of God, can for a moment suppose that this revelation is so utterly unintelligible, that every man may entertain his own mental vagaries in relation to "its most important elements." A collec-

* These quotations are taken from the debates of the fifth and sixth sittings of the Assembly, See *Voice of Israel*, vol. i., p. 179.

tion of such riddles would not be a revelation, but a mystery. I fear such loose and unsettled views in regard to the inspiration of Scripture, will, ere long, draw the more thinking and intelligent portion of my reformed brethren into the gulf of infidelity and atheism.

Believing, however, that there are still many of the house of Israel, who would shrink from denying, that "God, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb, i. 1), I earnestly entreat them to examine with me those records which we both acknowledge to be Divine; in order that we may discover from them what the work of the Messiah was to be. I shall seek to obtain this knowledge, not by confining myself to isolated texts, but by taking in the whole scope of that revelation which it pleases the Eternal God to make to His ignorant and sinful creatures.

In the midst of heathen darkness, a thoughtful mind was here and there enabled to grope its way towards the knowledge of a great First Cause; thus illustrating the truth of the statement in Rom. i. 20, that "the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are

clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." These thoughtful men were able to understand that matter could not create itself; that when nothing existed, life could not call itself into being. But all around them, and, above all, their own existence, were enigmas to them. And even such enigmas are life and creation to this day, to all those who reject Divine revelation. The mystery of life, the riddle of our existence, are phrases continually in the mouths of modern rationalists; those would-be philosophers, who deify the extravagancies of man's spirit, and bow to no other God than this idol within them. But our gracious Father did not leave us dependent on those rays of truth, which to our enfeebled vision appeared faint and indistinct, but was pleased to send a sunbeam direct from the fountain of eternal light, to disclose to us, not His mighty power alone, but His everlasting love. From the earliest recorded revelation we learn, that "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth:" that He who from all eternity dwelt "in the light which no man can approach unto," completely

happy in His own perfections, saw fit, in His infinite wisdom, to call into existence intelligent beings, composed of a material body and a spiritual soul. These He placed in a material habitation, suited to the faculties with which He had endowed them: "And God blessed them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good." (Gen. i. 28—31.)

How glorious must that state have been, which Infinite Wisdom pronounced to be "very good!" What visions of bliss must have risen to the view of the host of heaven, "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy!" (Job xxxviii. 7.) A happy creation, with man, the vicegerent of God, as its head and ruler; the lower creatures happy under man's gentle rule; man infinitely happy in the glory of that Creator with whom he lived in communion; and God rejoicing in the happiness of man, and in the perfection of everything that he had made. "He rested and was refreshed." (Exod. xxxi. 17.) What an "exceeding weight

of glory," incomprehensible to us, must the Divine Mind have perceived in that whereby He "was refreshed!" And shall we dare to say that this glory is gone for ever; that there shall never again be a time when God shall look on this earth and its inhabitants, and "be refreshed," because they are "very good?"

But God's "ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts." In His inscrutable wisdom, He permitted this "very good" condition of the creation to be interrupted by sin. The origin of evil is one of those mysteries that the wisest of men have in vain attempted to solve. Why a benevolent Being permitted the existence of that evil which His omnipotence might have prevented, is a question that must remain unanswered until that great day when our renovated powers and faculties shall enable us to comprehend the utmost depths of those "deep things of God" which are now but partially "revealed to us by the Spirit." (1 Cor. ii. 10.) To the true Christian it is no cause of doubt or anxiety. He sees that through the existence of evil there is that developed in the character of God which could never have been known

without it; and to him the knowledge of God is "life eternal." The "knowledge of good and evil" has taught the creature his own fallibility—his dependence on a higher power than his own. The act which was to make him "as God" (Gen. iii. 5) has shown him that he is not God, but a frail and limited being.

When the mind of man ceased to be in harmony with the mind of God, the whole work of creation was marred; man was condemned to labour, sorrow, and death; and his habitation was cursed for his sake. The scoffing infidel has often attempted to throw discredit on the Scripture narrative, by asking how it is possible that a merciful God could inflict so great a punishment for an offence so trivial. This is fallen man's estimate of sin. He views the commands of God as so many arbitrary prohibitions; and regards the outward breach of them as alone constituting the sin. But God looketh on the heart, and marks the sin which defiles it; the outward act is often but a slender off-shoot, when compared with the strength of the "root of bitterness" that lurks within. "Thou hast done evil things as thou couldst." (Jer. iii. 5.) If the power

to do evil were equal to the will, what a scene of confusion and ruin would this earth present! Our first parents had received from God a blessed existence; they enjoyed, in a degree of which we can form but a faint conception, spiritual and temporal blessings suited to their twofold nature. Even those who know what it is to draw near to a reconciled Father by Him who is "the way, the truth, and the life," can but dimly imagine the ineffable communion which the unfallen creature enjoyed with his Creator at those seasons when he was wont to hear "the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden." We can understand but little of this blessed intercourse; but we can understand something of the nature of its interruption. When the poison of suspicion has been injected into the mind, when we are led to doubt that love which we had believed pure and perfect, the joy of intercourse is gone; all communion has ceased; distrust and alienation take the place of confiding affection. "Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?" Has He selfishly withheld that which would raise you to a dignity like His own? But it was not the love of God alone that the

father of lies called in question; he sought also to disparage His moral character. When Eve repeated the denunciation attached to the transgression of God's commandment, the tempter dared to accuse the Most High of falsehood: "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God,* knowing good and evil." (Gen. iii. 4, 5.) The reception of these poisoned words was the entrance of sin in the human heart. The Being whose moral perfections and fatherly love had formed the enjoyment of their existence, now seemed stript of His glory; that in which they had trusted and delighted was gone; there remained a great, and a wise, and a terrible God; but the God of truth and love was no more; nay, had never been. Who can conceive the revulsion of feeling that must have taken place in the hearts of our first parents! When the love which had filled those hearts was thus rudely expelled, must not cold alienation, yea, even bitter hatred and contempt,

* I see no reason why the word *Elohim* should be translated *gods* here; the original gives no warrant for this rendering.

have rushed in to fill the void, and the happy and confiding children have been changed at once into strangers and enemies?

Vain man, in his puny wisdom, asks, "Why did not the Omnipotent at once remove this evil? Why must its bitter consequences drag on through centuries, and chiliads, making this fair earth a charnel-house, and its inhabitants either oppressed or oppressing,—tyrants or victims?" Because so it seemed good in the sight of the Omniscient. Sin has entered into His dominion, and the whole intelligent creation must be taught the awful nature of sin,—must learn that it is an evil and a bitter thing to depart from God. (Jer. ii. 19.) We poor creatures of a day cannot sit in judgment on the plans of Him who sees "the end from the beginning;" we must either humbly yield ourselves to these plans, and so obtain the honour of being "workers together with God;" or madly oppose them, and be "taken out of the way," along with all obstacles that let or hinder the purposes of God. The unfallen portion of God's creation are represented in Scripture as watching with intense eagerness the development of that glorious

scheme which is to bring good out of evil; as deriving instruction from His dealings with His fallen creature, man. That "salvation," respecting which "the prophets inquired diligently," is a matter which "the angels desire to look into;" (1 Peter i. 12), and "unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places," "the manifold wisdom of God" is made known "by the church." (Eph. iii. 10.) The dispensation that commenced in Eden, and concludes at "the restitution of all things," is a drama in which we are the actors, and of which the spectators are the unfallen intelligences. Well might the poet say, that we

> "Play such fantastic tricks before high Heaven
> As make the angels weep."

What a scene must this world present to an unclouded intellect, removed from the influence of its passions and prejudices! How strange must appear to them our paltry aims, our petty squabbles, our eager contests about painted bubbles, that burst when we grasp them! With what pity must they regard the folly of those who, while thirsting after happiness, forsake "the Fountain of living waters, and hew out

to themselves broken cisterns, that can hold no water!" (Jer. ii. 13.) And, again, what holy delight must they experience when they see the bold rebel changed into the weeping penitent—the prodigal returning to his father's house—the persecutor of the truth "preaching the faith which once he destroyed!" Yes, "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke xv. 10.)

Those who had seen the new recipients of the bounty of the Eternal installed into the dominion of that beautiful creation which had just been called into existence, who had heard them receive the blessing of the Highest, and His command to bear universal rule over a replenished and happy earth, were now called upon to behold the sad reverse occasioned by sin. The God of wisdom, and power, and love, must now be proved to be the God of truth; faithful in judgment, "just and true in all His ways." The forbidden crime had been committed; the threatened penalty must follow. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to

thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. iii. 17—19.)

What! The blessed of God sunk into degradation and misery! The creation which He pronounced "very good" become an accursed thing! Even so—for a season. But is the Almighty foiled in His designs? Has He abandoned His original plan through the machinations of an enemy? Has Satan indeed gained the victory? God forbid. He who is "mighty in counsel, and excellent in working" has permitted a temporary interruption of His purposes, in order to bring out of this obstruction a higher glory, a brighter manifestation of the Supreme Good. The Creator and Upholder must be known as the Redeemer and the Saviour. How are we constantly constrained to exclaim, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

To bring back rebel man to his allegiance to

God;—to bring this earth and its inhabitants once more into a condition in which their Creator can again pronounce them to be "very good;"—this is the work of the Messiah.

"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" (Ps. viii. 3, 4.) When the pious Psalmist contemplated these glorious works of God, he learned the insignificance of man; and, if we contemplate them in a like humble and reverential spirit, we may learn many other lessons of vast importance. What a contrast does their fixed and unerring regularity form with the shifting and uncertain condition of everything in the world we inhabit! There, all is order, all is harmony: God said, "Let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years" (Gen. i. 14); and years, days, and seasons, succeed each other with unvarying exactitude. In the qualities with which God has endowed inanimate nature, man has learnt to place implicit confidence; he knows they will not fail him, and he turns them to such good account that the wonders achieved by science in the course of

the last fifty years, exceed the fabulous inventions of an Eastern tale.

But when, from the inanimate creation, we turn to man, how great is the change! Whether we consider his moral or his physical condition, all seems disordered. He "is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards." In tender infancy, when watched over with the fondest care, he is attacked with disease, he is agonised with pain; and death, man's invincible enemy, often seizes him as his pray, in spite of all the precautions and all the skill that fond affection calls to her aid. If spared to grow up to maturity, disappointments of various kinds await him; circumstances which he can neither foresee nor prevent, overturn his long-cherished schemes; the events of an hour may undo the labour of years. Or if he is placed in circumstances of outward prosperity, if his garners are full, and his name crowned with honour, then the grim king of terrors enters his banqueting-hall, and carries off "the desire of his eyes with a stroke;" yea, he enters again and again, and carries away one and another of those most dear to him, and his splendid palace becomes a dreary desert.

I have given but a small portion of the catalogue of "ills that flesh is heir to." Time would fail me to tell of all the evils arising from the conflicting passions of men; from pride and envy, from burning wrath and chilling selfishness; from deceit and calumny; from malice, ingratitude, and revenge; from betrayed friendship, and disappointed affection. What man is there who has not suffered from some of these roots of bitterness? What nation is there under heaven, a large mass of whose population is not suffering from a combination of these evils?

The uncertainty and mutability of human affairs, and the disordered state of society, are facts too palpable to be denied. But while philosophers have never attempted to deny these facts, they have been satisfied with assigning very inadequate causes for them. If they believe the Great First Cause to be infinitely good and happy, the eternal fountain of life, can they believe that He originally created a world so unlike himself? What can be more contrary to all that human reason can conceive of God, than death and corruption? It is the custom at present to speak of "great facts."

But here is the greatest of all great facts—DEATH! The mighty conqueror, the invincible enemy, the insatiable tyrant before whom all must bend, even the greatest and the proudest, and be mown down like the grass! Whence came death into the creation of God? All the philosopher's analogies about the growth, the maturity, and the decay, of other organized bodies, will never satisfy man's inquiries on this subject; he can never feel that because the flower of the field withers and dies, it is meet and right that he also should become a clod of the valley. Think you that all your subtle reasonings will induce him to put his keen sensibilities, his lively sympathies, his warm affections, his lofty aspirations, into the same category with the stem and the leaves of the weed he crushes beneath his feet? Does the philosopher himself regard his little daughter twining her wreath of flowers with all the glee of childhood, and say, These roses must fade ere to-morrow's dawn, and that is reason enough why my beautiful child should become a livid corpse before my eyes, and then be hurried away as a loathsome thing! Awful sign and seal of the curse, that when once

death has seized on the tenderly-beloved, it may be the idolised object of our affections, we are forced to cry out with Abraham, "Give me a burying-place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight!"

No; mere human reason can never account for the existence of death, the great scourge of humanity, nor for the other physical evils that afflict man. Let us see if it is more successful in its endeavours to account for moral evil.

Among all the absurdities that have been affirmed from the beginning of the world to the present time, I am not aware that any one has ever been absurd enough to affirm, that in any place, or at any period, the social condition of man was in a perfectly satisfactory state. There have sometimes been brief seasons when, in some one favoured spot, the winds have been hushed, and the surface of society has worn a smooth aspect: "Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon" (1 Kings iv. 25.); yet never has the interior of society been free from those evils to which human passions

and human selfishness give rise. And how do the wise men of this world account for all this social disorder? In the great majority of cases, they lay the blame on the outward arrangements of society; on ill-constructed civil institutions; on the tyranny and rapacity of rulers, and the ignorance of subjects. But if it is to be attributed to defects in civil government, how comes it that man, with all his boasted wisdom, has never been able to invent a form of government, or to establish such institutions, as may insure a virtuous and happy population? All modes of government have been tried, from the most despotic monarchy, down through all the grades and combinations of power, to the most democratic republic, and still the social problem has never been solved. In each special case, we are told, there was some special hindrance, some undue tenacity of power, something that destroyed the social balance. This, however, is merely moving the difficulty a step farther off; the question is not so much, what have the hindrances been, as, why have there always been hindrances?

As civil arrangements have always been thus faulty, let us turn to that simple state of

society which is utterly unincumbered with such arrangements. Shall we find the happy and virtuous community of which we are in search, among the wandering Arabs, or in an Indian village, or Hottentot kraal? Or shall we go a step yet lower in the scale of humanity, and seek it amid the infanticide, the horrors, the nameless abominations, of the South Sea Islands? Ah! how do the cruelty, the injustice, the oppression of the weak by the strong, which we constantly encounter in uncivilized life, inspire us with respect for even the very worst form of civil government!

Suppose we admit that despotism and tyranny have contributed the full share assigned them in human misgovernment, we are no nearer the object of our inquiry; for whence come this tyranny and this despotism? Doth "affliction come forth of the dust, and trouble spring out of the ground?" And if we concede, as concede we must, that man's ignorance has much to do with social unhappiness, then the question occurs, Why is man ignorant? God has created all the lower animals with an instinct that infallibly guides them to their own well-being; has he created the noblest of

his works, the lord of all these animals, less perfect?

If human reason did not itself partake largely of the effects of the fall, I think it would long since have come to the conclusion that the discordant state of human society that has subsisted in all ages, in all countries, and in all stages of its progress as to science and learning, must arise, not from its mode of arrangement, for all modes have been tried, but from the nature of the materials of which it is composed. It would have concluded that some change must have come over the nature of man; that he cannot now be in the state in which he came from the hands of a perfect Creator. This, I think, would be a fair and legitimate deduction of reason from the phenomena that society has always presented. Yet this view of human nature has always been denied or evaded, both by philosophers and men of the world; and in the present day, after nearly six thousand years' experience of the depravity of man, grave metaphysicians speak of him as being naturally good, and only becoming evil through contact with others; and popular tale-writers scoff at the doctrine of natural corrup-

tion, and turn into ridicule the notion of men being "born bad." Strange phenomenon, that men born good and upright should teach one another all that is false and evil: that a number of good men, by contact with each other, should become bad men!

Blessed be God, who hath not left us to stumble on in darkness, ignorant of the cause of the evil that surrounds us on every side, and ignorant of its remedy. He has communicated to us the fact that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. v. 12.); that "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen. viii. 21.); that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." (Jer. xvii. 9.) Here is the solution of the mystery of man's social condition; here is the root from whence all the disorder springs; "For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit," (Mark vii. 21, 22.), and all the numerous train of social evils that disturb the peace of the world, and have disturbed it from the fall of man until now.

If the doctrine of the corruption of human

nature were denied only by those who reject Divine revelation, though we should still charge them with reasoning contrary to fact, their denial of it would cause less surprise; because one error always makes way for another. But strange to say, many of the modern Jews, who acknowledge the Scriptures of the Old Testament to be a revelation from God, also deny this doctrine which is so plainly taught in these Scriptures. Their minds have become, perhaps unknown to themselves, imbued with the current philosophy of the day; and they have not entered on the inquiry how far this philosophy coincides with those declarations they still profess to consider infallibly true.

If anything is plainly set forth in that portion of God's revelation that was committed to the keeping of Israel, it is the doctrine of human depravity. At the commencement of it we are told of the disobedience of our first parents, and their consequent alienation from God; and the rest of the sacred history is a narration of the effects of this alienation; a series of illustrations of the doctrine of man's natural corruption. The morning of the world was stained with a brother's murder; and scarcely

had two generations of the early race passed away, when the wickedness of man had become so great on the earth, that general amendment was impossible, and therefore God needed to execute "His strange work" (Isaiah xxviii. 21), the work of destruction, and sweep off all, save the chosen seed, from the face of the world. Many centuries had not passed away after this awful visitation, until man was again found in mad rebellion against his Maker. And when the sacred record passes from the history of mankind at large, to that of a single nation, a nation placed in most favourable circumstances, what is it but a record of folly and ingratitude; a narrative of the wickedness of the many, and the redemption from wickedness of a very few out of the many; whose painful office it was to "sigh and cry for the abominations" around them, and to intercede with God for the sinners among whom they dwelt.

And if we turn from sacred history to profane history, its testimony is precisely the same. It is little else than a chronicle of crime and misery. And is it not most unreasonable, most unphilosophical, to attribute this universal preponderance of evil among men, to

some of the accidents of man's condition, rather than to the nature of man himself?

Those who maintain that the soul of man is a sufficient guide to itself, that its own internal dictates will lead man into all truth, independent of a Divine revelation, seem to overlook the notorious fact, that it never has so guided man, except when influenced, directly or indirectly, by the light of God's outwardly revealed will. Man's reason and experience have taught him the properties of matter, and have also enabled him to frame certain police regulations useful for the preservation of life and property. But unassisted reason has never taught him the true character of God, nor the real state of the relation between himself and the Maker and Upholder of all things. Every approach towards truth in regard to these matters, may be distinctly traced to the light derived either from the earlier or later revelations of God to man; either to that which "at sundry times and in divers manners He spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets;" or to that which "in these latter days he had spoken to us by His Son." (Heb. i. 1, 2.) We have no diffi-

culty in tracing the civilization of Europe to the measure of Christian truth generally diffused therein; and I doubt not that the knowledge of Jewish truth had a more powerful effect in producing any measure of ancient civilization that existed, than any record now extant gives a hint of.

I have dwelt thus long on the doctrine of the corruption of human nature, because I consider it the fundamental truth on which all others are based. The fall of man has so entirely changed his relation with his Maker, that every religious system which does not recognise this altered relationship, must be a false system, and can never lead to the union of the creature with God. From the doctrine of man's depravity arises the doctrine of an atonement; from the fact that a curse has been judicially pronounced upon man by his Maker, arises the necessity of a Deliverer from the curse. The infidel, with his negative creed, may scoff at the notions both of a fall and of a Messiah; but how the Jew can deny the fall, or regard the Messiah as a mere mortal man, and yet consider himself a believer in the Divine authority of his own Scriptures, is

indeed strange; and is one of the many proofs how much the understanding is influenced by the will and the passions of men.

"Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Gen. iii. 17—19.) The Jew admits that God spake these words; he dare not deny that these words are true; why then deny the fall of man? If man fell not, why this curse? Why this condemnation to return to dust? Why is man forced to say "to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister"? (Job xvii. 14.) With the curse of God hanging over man as man, whether Jew or Gentile, it is folly to talk of a mere human Messiah, himself under the same curse. The Messiah the Jews need, the Messiah humanity needs, is one who can remove the curse, who can "finish transgression, and make an end of sins, and make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness." (Dan. ix. 24.) This is the work

the Messiah must perform; the victory He has to accomplish is not over infidel hordes who usurp the land promised to the Jews, but over sin, and death, and the curse.

When God had created man in His image and likeness, He placed him on this earth as His vice-gerent and representative; endowing him with rule and dominion "over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." (Gen. i. 28.) Man's authority on earth was supreme; but it was a delegated authority; a dominion conferred on him by the God of heaven and earth; and this God he must have been required to recognize as the Fountain of power, by whom his own supremacy over the lower creation was bestowed. It is not forced or unnatural to suppose, that the visible worship of man in his unfallen state might have included some eucharistic sacrifice; some presentation of the fruits of the earth, as a visible symbol and acknowledgment that God is Lord of the earth; and that from Him as the superior, man held it as the subject and tenant. His language might have been: "From thee, O

God, have I and all creatures received everything we possess and enjoy; and in acknowledgment of this, we present unto thee a portion of the bounties so liberally bestowed upon us; of thine own we give thee, in token that thou art the rightful proprietor, and that we hold all things by thy good pleasure." With such holy confidence might the unfallen creature approach his Maker; humble, yet trustful; with veneration, yet unabashed.

But when man had disobeyed God, when his affections had become alienated from the Author of his being, could he thus approach the holy Majesty of heaven? If the sacred narrative had been silent on the subject, our own consciousness of the alienation and distrust produced by the knowledge that we have grievously offended, would lead us to infer that such holy boldness in the creature's approach to his Creator was now at an end. But the word of God does not leave us to our own inferences on this matter; the change is plainly declared. "I heard thy voice in the garden," said Adam. And was this, as before, "a joyful sound," calling him to commune with his Heavenly Father? No; "I was

afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." (Gen. iii. 10.) His body had possessed no more clothing formerly than it had now; but his soul had been clothed with righteousness, with holy love; with filial devotion: it was now stript of these, and he feared in this spiritual nakedness to approach a God of infinite purity. He felt He had given just cause for anger; he dreaded the anger of Omnipotence; and he hated the justice that condemned him. Man and his Maker were now alienated.

And up to the present moment do the effects of man's first disobedience tell on the human race. The carnal, or natural mind, is still "enmity against God." There still lurks in the heart of man that aversion to come into direct contact with God, which Adam felt when he "hid himself from the presence of the Lord amongst the trees of the garden." Unhappy, fallen man! Though Eden still bloomed around him, beautiful as ever, it was no longer to him a "garden of delight;" his peace of mind was gone; and the dread of encountering the God whom he had offended, poisoned every enjoyment.

What was needful to restore man again to happiness? Reconciliation with the God of heaven; the restoration of the filial relationship between man and his Maker. And could man do anything towards effecting this? Surely not. Sorrow for the past, and promises for the future, could neither cancel sin, nor annul its consequences; they might infuse a hope of escaping punishment, but could never inspire a filial love to the offended God. To do this, the overture of reconciliation must come from God himself.

It is no wonder that the Rationalist, who treats the greater portion of the Old Testament as a mere Eastern myth or allegory, should set little store by the events narrated in the third chapter of Genesis; but that the Jews should see so little in them, considering the position they occupy in the Pentateuch, seems strangely inconsistent. I believe the explanation of this is, that all their commentators, whose works are now extant, lived subsequently to the Christian era; and they, doubtless, thought it best to avoid any admission which they perceived the Christians might take advantage of. It is only in this way we can

account for their meagre and empty comments on the important events of this chapter, as contrasted with the minute and tedious way in which they dilate on almost every word of passages that are of much less importance. Whatever the Rationalist or the Socinian may say of the contents of this chapter, the Jew must surely admit that it is a solemn account, communicated to us by God himself, of man's fall from the state in which he was created, and of the consequent penalty inflicted on him. If it be not this, what is it? Is it a mere early incident in Adam's history, which passed off without leaving any after consequences? Have his posterity inherited nothing of his penalty; and has the creation again returned to the "very good" estate in which God created it? If it be a gross absurdity to maintain this, which we think every thoughtful Jew must admit, then we ask, Is there no promise to man of any restoration from the effects of the fall? Did God make no overture of reconciliation to fallen man; did He hold out no prospect of deliverance—no hope of a deliverer? Did the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the

serpent mean nothing more than that men should occasionally kill serpents by setting their feet on them? Yet such is all that the Jewish commentators make out of this passage. Is it possible to believe, that after a transaction of such mighty importance as to cause the Almighty to curse His newly-formed creation on account of it, His first solemn annunciation, when the guilty parties were summoned before Him, should amount to no more than a statement like this? The act of disobedience which has just been narrated, altered man's spiritual and physical condition, and brought a curse even on his habitation; and did God hold out no promise to Adam of a redemption from the serpent's seduction—no hint that a descendant of the woman should undo the mischief done by the serpent—should "bruise his head?"

I believe this declaration of God to the serpent to be the first promise of that Deliverer who came to redeem man and his habitation from the effects of the curse; who, at the consummation of the ages," or preparatory dispensations, *συντελεια τῶν αἰώνων* "hath appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of

himself" (Heb. ix. 26.); by which sacrifice all who trust in Him are even now delivered from the power and dominion of sin; that Deliverer whose "glorious appearing," "without a sin-offering unto salvation," we yet look for: even that "time of the restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21), when the creation shall again be "very good," and "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them." (Rev. xxi. 3.)

It is evident that Lamech expected a period of deliverance from the curse; and it appears probable that he thought his son Noah might be the promised deliverer. "And Lamech lived an hundred and eighty-two years, and begat a son; and he called his name Noah [נח, *rest*] saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." (Gen. v. 28, 29.) That this view of the signification of Noah's name is not foreign to Jewish commentators is proved by the following quotation from Rabbi Solomon Ben Melech, in the notes to the new version of the Old Testament, now publishing by Messrs.

De Sola, Lindenthal, and Raphall.* "Noah was the first patriarch born after the death of Adam, with whose decease the curse inflicted on the earth because of him, would, as Lamech hoped, be withdrawn." Lamech must have looked not merely to the death of Adam as removing the curse, but to his son's being instrumental to the expected deliverance; else he would not have said, "This one [זֶה] shall comfort us."

Of all the strange opinions that have been propounded by commentators, ancient and modern, none appears to me more utterly absurd than the notion that sacrifices were originally of human invention. What! shall we imagine that an act so aptly foreshadowing that great sacrifice, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," was an invention of fallen and ignorant man; and that God availed Himself of man's vagaries, in a matter so important as the established relations between Himself and His creatures during the whole of the preparatory dispensation? I firmly believe

* The sacred Scriptures in Hebrew and English. A new translation, with notes, critical and explanatory. To be had of J. L. Lindenthal, New Synagogue, Crosby-square.

that such a preposterous notion of the origin of sacrifice would never have been broached, had there not been a desire to get rid of the doctrine of sacrifice—the need of an atonement in order to reconciliation with God.

The doctrine of sacrifice is simply the following:—The man who slew an animal in sacrifice, confessed that as a sinner he was continually obnoxious to the wrath of God, and the punishment of death; that God in mercy had remitted the sentence, and accepted this animal as his substitute, in virtue of that great sacrifice to be accomplished by Him who should one day be "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." Viewed thus in prospective reference to the death of Christ, sacrifice is a solemn and impressive symbol; calculated at once to teach the sinner the awful evil of sin, and the amazing love of Him who gave himself as a propitiation for our sins; as the sufferings of the innocent victim faintly shadowed forth the agony of Him who "made His soul an offering for sin." If we regard it as having no such reference, the sacrifice of an innocent animal is a mere piece of disgusting cruelty, unworthy of

God or man. "Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour." Noah had by God's command carefully preserved the lives of these animals from the Deluge; and would he now, without a Divine command, dare to take their lives? Such an act of cruel will-worship would not have been a "sweet savour," but an abomination to the Lord. The language used by God when the sacrifices were offered in mere formality and hypocrisy, would surely have been yet more appropriate when offered as an act of presumptuous will-worship: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?" "Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" (Isaiah i. 11; Psa. i. 13.)

I fully agree with those who believe that the institution of sacrifice dates from the fall of man. "Unto Adam and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them." I do not believe that God took the life of the animals merely for the purpose of procuring raiment for Adam and Eve. Connected with the prominent part that sacrifices

afterwards had in the appointed worship of God, we cannot doubt that the skins wherewith he clothed them, were the skins of the animals slain at the institution of sacrifices: mere covering, Adam and Eve had previously had ingenuity enough to procure for themselves.

Cain and Abel, doubtless, learned from their parents to offer to God that worship which was acceptable to Him. Each brought an offering (מנחה *Mincha*) unto the Lord; but the offering of Cain was simply that of the unfallen creature; a portion of the fruits of the earth in token of feudal dependence; while the offering of Abel was at once an offering and a sacrifice. The offering of Cain might have been accepted, had it been accompanied by a sin-offering: "If thou dost not well, a sin-offering coucheth at the door."* (Gen. iv. 7.) As the *mincha*, or offering of an Israelite, was, in after times, sanctified by the continual burnt-offering, the daily morning and evening sacrifice; so Cain's offering of fruits

* No sound Hebraist will question that this is the best rendering of חטאת רבץ.

might have been acceptable, if accompanied by that "blood of atonement," without which there was no remission of sins.

It is instructive to observe the anxiety with which those who deny the doctrine of atonement, seek to weaken the effect of such passages of Scripture as those I have just been considering. In the Hebrew the words *fat* and *milk* (חלב) have the same letters, and are only distinguished by the vowel points. Hence, those who wish to prove that Abel's sacrifice was also a bloodless one, translate it, "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the *milk* thereof," But as we never, on any other occasion, find that *milk* was used as an offering, while *fat* was constantly so used,* nothing but a desire to get rid of the doctrine of the atonement could induce such a rendering. I am glad to see Jewish translators, in the version above alluded to, do not avail themselves of this subterfuge, but translate it "fat."

Again, in regard to the coats of skins, Rabbi

* We presume these commentators do not maintain that "the *milk* that covereth the inwards" was *burnt* upon the altar?

Solomon Yarchi suggests that it may mean the fur or wool of skins. This little hint of his I consider very important, because it seems to betray a consciousness that some inference may be drawn from the circumstance of God clothing our first parents with *skins*, which it is desirable to get rid of. We cannot conceive anything but such a consciousness, suggesting this rendering; as the word עור, is never in Scripture used for wool or fur, but always for skin.

In this deeply important portion of the revealed word of God, the third chapter of Genesis, we have the germ of all that was afterwards more fully revealed. The history of mankind from that time to the present, is at once a narrative, and an illustration, of the consequences of the serpent's work in the seduction of our first parents; and the object of each subsequent revelation has been, to enable the creature, in some degree, to resist these evil consequences, through the power of that Deliverer who is here promised ultimately to undo the mischief done to God's "very good" creation;—that seed of the woman who shall finally bruise the serpent's head.

I know not anything that threatens to operate more fatally on the cause of truth in the present day, than loose notions in regard to the infallibility of the Holy Scriptures. There can be no middle position in regard to this matter. If they are not infallible, then they are fallible. If they be fallible, they come to us with no authority at all. In this case, instead of the Bible judging us, we must sit in judgment upon it; we must question all its precepts, and demand of it to show us the use and reasonableness of every command before we obey it. We scoff at its "Thus saith the Lord:" and say, Thou mayst think so, thou old prophet, or seer, who lived in an ignorant and superstitious age, but *we* know better. The prophet says that the heart of man is "desperately wicked." This view of the case was very natural in his day and circumstances, but with the transcendent light we now possess, we perceive that the heart or nature of man is pure, and beautiful, and good; that all evil is accidental and from without, and can be swept away at man's will and pleasure; and will be so, when all men come to think as we do. "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man,

that they are vanity," says the royal seer. (Ps. xciv. 11.) This is too much for our transcendental self-complacency; we say the seer was a foolish old man, and shut the book. We are the gods that know good and evil; we have all the light these men had, and a great deal more; and shall we be dictated to, and tied down, by forms of thought that belong to a byegone age? These are the fair and legitimate deductions that proceed from denying the inspiration and consequent infallibility of the Holy Scriptures.

It is of the utmost importance to have distinct views of the unity of the Holy Spirit's teaching; whether permanently deposited in the written revelation, or individually communicated to the soul of man. It is the want of perceiving or admitting the identity of the communications conveyed in these different modes, that has produced the great abuses that have frequently arisen under colour of the doctrine of spiritual influence and internal revelation. This is a subject on which it is very difficult to speak so as not to be misunderstood; because it is one of those things of which only they that are spiritual can

judge; to the "natural man" they "are foolishness: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15.) One is apt to be assailed by two opposite parties. If we hold up the necessity and infallibility of the written revelation, one party charges us with bibliolatry; and say we worship the material books we give away, and make gods of them. If, on the other hand, we maintain the perfect competence of the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ and show them to a soul, entirely irrespective of the written word, another party declares that we give up all positive and historical revelation, and leave men open to the inroads of the wildest fanaticism. To both parties I would say, "You misunderstand me." I do not maintain that the letter-press regenerates; I do not assert that the Holy Spirit reveals to the soul anything but what He has already revealed in the written word. I am not speaking of different revelations, but of the same revelation, communicated in different ways.

I believe there is a very general impression, both among educated Jews and nominal Christians, that there are great difficulties in the

Old Testament Scriptures; obscurities which it is best not to pry into; and stumbling-blocks that we must scramble round the best way we can. Difficulties there are, doubtless; but why? From the limitation of our capacities. By diligent perseverance we can make wonderful discoveries in regard to those things that we can touch and handle; or those material bodies that have certain fixed relations to space and time; but the moment we quit the region of the material, difficulties surround us on every side. Politics, morals, the union of soul and body, all things with which these mysterious agents, *mind* and *life*, have to do, are full of difficulties. There is no difficulty in Scripture that has not its corresponding difficulty in the providential economy of the world; in famines, pestilences, earthquakes; in the darkness of heathen lands, in the life-long miseries of slavery. We cannot, by unassisted reason, reconcile these things, and many others, with Omnipotent Goodness; it is that revelation alone, of which we speak as if it only were difficult and mysterious, that helps us to understand the mysteries of this present dispensation. Sin has entered into the world;

and the great question must be settled in the sight of all the intelligent creation, whether the creature can be prosperous and happy while it has a will at variance with the will of its Creator. That no created being can be happy in this state of opposition and alienation, one might imagine a self-evident proposition; and yet it is one that the great majority of mankind practically deny at this present time. Neither the boldest infidel nor the maddest optimist will venture to maintain that the "will of God" is now "done on earth as it is in heaven."

But while there are difficulties in Scripture arising from the limitation of our powers, there are many difficulties we ourselves make, from our groundless expectations of the kind of information it ought to contain. It is neither a book of historical annals, nor of moral philosophy, nor of natural history. It is a revelation of such a portion of the mind of God as He sees it fit for man to know; an authoritative announcement of what He sees it right for man to do; and just so much of the history of mankind as in His infinite wisdom He saw to be needful to teach man what he is by nature, and what he may become by grace.

The details of the antediluvian world are very brief. With greater physical advantages, and more than tenfold greater longevity, than is possessed at present, man was eminently wicked. As they multiplied, evil was multiplied; until it pervaded "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart." Then was manifested that distinction—call it providential, predestining, or what we will—that marked distinction that has obtained ever since, between the many and the few—the ungodly mass, and the "remnant according to the election of grace." "Enoch walked with God, and he was not; for God took him" (Gen. v. 24); and we know not how many others, not put on record, may also have walked with God, and been taken away from the evil to come. I have sometimes heard regrets expressed or implied, that we have not more ample information relative to the theology of the antediluvians; no express mention of their views in regard to the Messiah. If there had been no subsequent revelation, this regret might be reasonable; but it must be recollected that at the time this portion of the history of mankind was revealed to Moses, and

put on record for the benefit, primarily, of the children of Israel, this nation was itself in direct communication with God. It did not require for its own edification to know what measure of light was given to the antediluvians respecting the future Deliverer. This will answer all complaints of deficient revelation at any given period. In each dispensation there was probably much revealed that God did not see it fit to put upon record; because those for whose use the record was intended, had received the same revelations more directly.

We believers in Christ, who know that God "hath in these last days spoken unto by His Son," are aware that Enoch distinctly saw that a Deliverer should one day come, who should deliver His people by taking vengeance on their enemies. "And Enoch, also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying: Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all; and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their

hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." (Jude 14, 15.) I have no doubt, that as the prophets at a later period saw successive judgments as one event, and in describing the impending danger, gave it all the features of the greater and more remote visitation, so Enoch saw in the judgment of the flood, that advent of the Lord and His mighty ones for which we yet look. I do not, of course, expect my Jewish brethren to receive this testimony; but it is evident from their own Scriptures, that Enoch foresaw the impending judgment of the flood, by the name he gave his son. He called him, מתושלח, *Methusalah*, which means: *At his death it shall be sent;* and accordingly the flood came the year after Methusalah died. This little hint, which, is only dropped incidentally, and to which our attention is not at all directed by Scripture, may serve as an indication that much was known in every age, by the people of that age, that has not been committed to writing "for our learning." The standing type of the Messiah in the antediluvian, and all subsequent ages, until the "fulness of time

was come," was the celebration of sacrifices: to which, as I have already said, there is but one consistent meaning.

The history of the world may be designated, a record of man's endeavours to do the work of the Messiah; of his strivings to make the moral and physical condition of man again "very good." These endeavours are by no means to be regarded as in themselves sinful; but in all instances, save those in which they have tended to diffuse some knowledge of the Messiah and His work, they have proved utterly abortive. The discoveries of recent travellers all tend to prove, that many countries now sunk in moral and physical degradation, once excelled in the arts, and possessed a high state of civilization. But all these social advantages have passed away, and are as though they had never been. Never has there been any permanent and progressive amelioration of man's condition, except where there has been some knowledge of Christ and His glorious work of redemption. Even when it does not effect the submission of the entire man to his Redeemer, where it does not "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ"

(2 Cor. x. 5.), it yet elevates the mind, raises the standard of virtue, and puts morality on its true foundation. It produces a Europe, instead of an Asia.

I think the past history of the world should have moderated the tone of those philosophers and moralists who dilate on the innate dignity and goodness of human nature. I do not deny that it possesses some traces of its original greatness; and in some few favoured individuals these traits shine forth in a manner that commands our admiration. But these rare specimens do not show us what man *is;* they only give some faint intimations of what he was intended to be. If human nature were such as a certain school of philosophy would represent it, the history of mankind would have been very different. For what is the whole history of the human race, but a chronicle of failures and apostacies? The antediluvian dispensation ended in a measure of wickedness that brought the Flood. The early inhabitants of the re-peopled earth were soon found in united rebellion against God; their social fabric was destroyed; and they were scattered hither and thither, to construct the

frame-work of society anew. Of all the great nations of antiquity that have successively risen, flourished, decayed, and fallen, what was the moral character? We can only describe them in the words of the inspired historian, when speaking of nations yet more ancient, and say, they "were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." (Gen. xiii. 13.) Could we be brought into personal contact with some of these men, around whom classical associations have thrown a halo of glory, how should we shrink from them as monsters of iniquity!

Society has a constant tendency to retrograde, whenever the efforts for its progress are either relaxed, or interrupted by outward causes. It is not like the fertile soil, which, after a period of neglect, needs only to have its luxuriant weeds removed, and its redundant foliage pruned, in order to be again as productive as ever; it partakes more of the nature of the bleak and barren moor, which, having been, by art and diligence, forced into reluctant cultivation, returns, after a few years of neglect, to its original desolation; and requires the whole process again to be gone through, before it can attain to any degree of fruitfulness.

The refinement of manners, superinduced on society that has enjoyed a long period of civilization, is perhaps a more superficial thing than its possessors imagine, or would willingly admit. I have heard of several instances of individuals of polished manners, and, as they probably flattered themselves while in this country, refined minds, who on emigrating to a new and unsettled country, have at once, and without effort, thrown off all the decencies of civilized life, and become degraded, morally and physically, almost to the level of the wretched aborigines. These are, doubtless, extreme cases; but they indicate the natural tendency of fallen humanity; which shows itself when the wholesome restraints of society are removed.

Those who look for the "restitution of all things" (Acts iii. 21.) at the second coming of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, and who look for no permanent amelioration of the state of the world till then, are sometimes upbraided as taking gloomy and hopeless views of the present condition of things, and of the effects of efforts for the spread of the gospel. Now I can honestly declare, that if I looked to human

efforts to bring about the millennium, I should be in utter despair about it. When I contemplate the small progress that even the outward knowledge of Christianity has made, and the much smaller progress of Christianity in its vital power; when I see the powers of the world crushing the gospel, and the monster Popery desolating the fairest and most successful of modern missions; when I see the spirit of liberty so often in base alliance with irreligion and infidelity; when I find some of the noblest minds of the day, those who give the tone to the opinions of men of thought and talent, doting about the excellence and perfection of human nature; when I behold the world, which is opposed to God, so active and so able, and the church, on the contrary, so divided and so feeble, I see not a single ray of hope that the converson of the world, as it is called, will ere long be effected by missionary operations. Blessed, indeed, are these operations; they save individual souls; they call out the members of that glorious company who form the "Bride, the Lamb's wife;" but if I trusted to them for the covering the whole earth with the knowledge of the Lord, I should

regard the "glory of the latter days" as at an almost hopeless distance. I look for no gradual amelioration of the world's condition; the Scripture tells us to look for "wars, and rumours of wars;" for "famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places;" for "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming upon the earth;" and THEN, at that time, not when the world is all converted, we shall "see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory;" (Luke xxi. 26, 27; Matt. xxiv. 7.) to take unto Himself His great power and reign. And, therefore, when we "see these things begin to come to pass" we "look up, and lift up our heads," knowing that our "redemption draweth nigh" (Luke xxi. 28.), that our Messiah will return to complete His work; that having at His first coming made "reconciliation for iniquity," He will at His second coming "bring in everlasting righteousness" (Dan. ix. 24.) which shall "cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." O glorious period! Who could believe it near at hand, and be unduly occupied with the concerns of this present evil age? Who can regard

the varied misery of the groaning earth, without "looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God" (2 Peter iii. 12.), without fervently praying, "Come quickly, Lord Jesus?"

The patriarchal dispensation possesses many interesting features well worthy of study; but my limits forbid me to dwell on it. The union of the kingly and priestly office in the head of the family, reminds the student of prophecy of that time, when the Head of the church shall be a "priest upon his throne." (Zech. vi. 13.) The history of Job shows us that these family priests were well instructed in the doctrine of the coming Deliverer, as well as in that of the atonement. Not only did this pious patriarch offer that typical and commemorative sacrifice, the shedding of blood, without which there is no remission of sin, but he "knew that his Redeemer lived, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth," when he, Job, in his flesh, or resurrection-body, shall see Him. And what may we suppose Job expected this Redeemer to do? Not only to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, but also to deliver the earth from the consequences of sin, from

violence and oppression — from the Sabeans, and the Chaldeans, and the great enemy who made these lawless hordes his instruments.

I believe many of my Jewish brethren do not sufficiently consider that the first dispensation was not limited, but universal; not Jewish, but common to all mankind. If there are but few of them who now sincerely believe that "the world was created on account of the *Torah*" (law,) there are certainly many who entirely forget that there was a time when there was neither Jew nor Gentile, and that men, nevertheless, "called on the name of the Lord," and offered sacrifices to Him. Great and glorious, indeed, were the privileges of the Jewish people; but their separation was only a part of the Divine purpose—a means to an end; not an end in itself. From our knowledge of the tendencies of fallen humanity, we can understand how, in a few generations, the true religion became corrupted; how the traditions of truth were mixed up with fables, until at length the false superseded the true. Though the true religion was not entirely lost, yet in the days of Terah, the father of Abraham, idolatry seems to have prevailed. (Joshua

xxiv. 2.) God therefore saw fit to select a portion of the human race to be depositories of the truth, and to be witnesses for it to the rest of the nations. "Ye are my witnesses," was the frequent declaration of God to the Jews. Their election was not for the purpose of limiting the knowledge and the grace of God, but for its better diffusion. This the church of old was taught by the Holy Spirit to express—"God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us; that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." (Psalm lxvii. 1, 2.) Some may say—If this was the purpose of the Jewish election, why did it fail in accomplishing this purpose? This is but one form of the great question which Divine revelation alone can solve. The prophet foretold that the Messiah was to be the "Prince of Peace;" that "of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and justice" (Isaiah ix. 6, 7); and the heavenly messengers declared "peace on earth," as one of the fruits of his advent. But our Lord declares, that he "came not to

send peace on earth, but a sword; to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother" (Matt. x. 34, 35); and we find the truth of His words unto this day. How are we to reconcile these things? In this way: that the creature has further lessons to learn of his own helplessness and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and therefore neither the Jewish church nor the Christian church has yet succeeded in making the way of God known upon earth, nor His saving health among all nations.

We have no details given us of the first appearance of the Lord to Abraham, when he said unto him, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." From the corroborative testimony of Stephen, (Acts vii. 2), it appears this revelation was given in Ur of the Chaldees, before he dwelt in Haran. After the death of his father Terah, the same intimation was repeated; and his departure from Haran was a departure from his family and kindred, who appear to have settled in Haran as their adopted country. It is interesting to observe the slow and gradual

manner in which God communicated his purposes to Abraham. He first appeared to him in Ur of the Chaldees; this produced no other outward result than a removal to Haran. This is supposed to have taken place when Abraham was about sixty years of age. Fifteen years afterwards, he departed from Haran to Canaan, and, for many years, lived the wandering life of the nomade Arabs of the present day. How many thoughts of the future must have passed through the mind of the holy patriarch, as he wandered over the extensive plains that afforded pasturage to his numerous flocks! Doubtless, he himself practised the pious custom he afterwards taught his son Isaac; and when "he went out to meditate in the field, at the eventide," and surveyed the innumerable stars shining in the unclouded brilliancy of an Eastern sky, the childless old man would ponder the words of the Lord—"So shall thy seed be." The inspired apostle tells us, that "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform." (Rom. iv. 20, 21.)

The covenant made with Abraham is one of those passages of Scripture that are erroneously viewed by a large portion both of Jews and Christians. The former see nothing relating to the Messiah in it; while the latter see nothing but the promised Messiah, and the temporary possession of Canaan by the Israelites, from the time of Joshua till their dispersion. To the Jews I would say, It is utterly absurd to suppose that any blessing in which "all the families of the earth" were to partake, could be accomplished irrespectively of the Messiah, the Deliverer from the curse that now hangs over man and his habitation. To the Christians I would say, The Israelites did not hold Canaan during the period referred to by Abraham's covenant, but by a conditional covenant entered into with themselves, in which their continuance in the land was contingent on their obedience.* The covenant made with Abraham, on the contrary, was free and unconditional—"Unto thee will I give it." This is expressly stated by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul—"The covenant that was

* For a full exposition of this subject, I refer my readers to Dr. Keith's interesting work, "The Land of Israel."

confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise." (Gal. iii. 17, 18.) It is altogether to confound things that differ, to maintain that the precarious tenure by which the children of Israel held Canaan—from the time they first occupied it until their expulsion, when the Lord would no longer endure their peate d breaches of His covenant—is identical with the everlasting possession of the inheritance so repeatedly promised to Abraham.

The mode in which the covenant made with Abraham is spoken of in Holy Scripture is alike opposed to the partial views both of Jews and Christians; it is referred to, throughout the whole inspired volume, as something special and peculiar—its blessings extend to all the families of the earth: and yet it has an especial connection with the Jewish people. If, as some Christians suppose, nothing more was meant than that the Messiah should descend from him, this was no special promise to Abraham, no peculiar honour conferred on him

individually, but one he shared with his father Terah, and with hundreds of his descendants. Nor could the great blessing promised consis simply in having a numerous progeny, millions of whom were wicked and miserable. A numerous seed, who were to be a blessing, was a glorious promise; but a numerous seed, who should so dishonour God as to be driven out of their land in disgrace, to be a proverb, a bye word, and a reproach among all nations, savours more of a curse than of a blessing. Oh! if Christians would but consider how the truth and the glory of God are connected with the integrity of His promise to Abraham, they would not dismiss the subject in the careless and cursory manner many of them are accustomed to do, but would patiently investigate whether a portion of that promise does not yet remain to be fulfilled.

One marked peculiarity of all prophetic intimations, is, that they never stop short of the ultimate judgment, or the ultimate deliverance. This is one cause of their apparent obscurity; all that has been fulfilled appears to fall short of the full amount of the prediction. The matter may be stated thus: The creation

which God made "very good" has fallen into a corrupt and evil state: God has revealed His purpose of undoing this evil—bruising the head of the serpent through the seed of the woman. This grand consummation was ever in the minds of the inspired prophets, and, therefore, every judgment, and every deliverance, as a type and an approximation to the last great judgment and deliverance, carried them, in spirit, to the time of "the restitution of all things;" and the prediction that commenced with the nearer event, almost invariably concluded with the "consummation of the age" (*συντελεια του αιωνος*), when "the Lord shall reign for ever and ever," and "the righteous shall flourish"—shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father."

This key to the predictions of the prophets will remove much of their obscurity; will solve the difficulty of fitting the apparent fulfilment to the prophecy, by intimating that the entire accomplishment will not take place until the time when "the Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity." (Matt. xiii. 41.)

In considering any of these Divine intimations of the future which were communicated, either directly by God himself, or through the medium of His prophets, we must therefore, in order to understand them aright, connect them with the great Deliverer and the final deliverance—with the Messiah and His work. In the promise to Abraham this connection is too obvious to require proof—"In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." If the families of the earth were to be blessed in Abraham, irrespectively of the Messiah, then Abraham, and not the Messiah, would be the great Deliverer. I believe, that in Abraham, in his seed, the Messiah, and in his seed the children of Israel, all the families of the earth will yet be blessed. I do not tell my brethren, the Jews, that this has already been accomplished, but I say that it has been partially accomplished. The Deliverer promised in Eden, He who was emphatically "the seed of the woman" (Gen. iii. 15; Isaiah vii. 14), and who was born of a lineal descendant of Abraham, has come, and "hath poured out his soul unto death; and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many.'

(Isaiah liii. 12.) He left to His disciples a blessed word of truth to proclaim, even "the everlasting gospel:" not a new religion, but a development and expansion of that which was from the beginning. Wherever this has been received into the heart, man has been truly blessed; wherever it has even been assented to by the understanding, and, in any measure, taken as a rule of life, the face of society has changed; barbarism has given place to civilization. But I believe the blessing promised to Abraham will have a further accomplishment: not only shall His seed, the Messiah, who now reigns only in the hearts of a few humble followers, reign over the whole earth; but the seed of Jacob, who inherited the birthright of blessing, shall yet "be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men." (Micah v. 7.)

When my brethren are asked in what way the families of the earth have been blessed through Abraham and his seed, it is customary with them to say, that a knowledge of the true God has been communicated to men through the diffusion of their sacred Scriptures.

But who has done this? Jews first, undoubtedly; but only such Jews as believed in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. Does it never occur to them as somewhat singular, that all the knowledge of God and of Divine revelation that has ever been conveyed to ignorant idolators, has not been by Jews as such, but by believers in what they consider a false religion — by followers of one whom they believe to be an impostor? Dear brethren of the house of Israel! I will not ask why you sought not to diffuse the knowledge of the Most High during the dark ages of persecution, when you were in continual fear; but I ask, Why do you make no efforts now for extending the knowledge of God over the earth? why do you leave this good work exclusively to those whom you consider to have mixed up fables with truth, and who never circulate "the law, the psalms, and the prophets," without appending to them, as the revelation of God, writings which you believe to be mere inventions of men? It is no answer to this to say, that proselytism is no part of the Jewish religion; and that all that is required of others, is to observe what you are pleased to call the laws

of the Noachidæ*; this may form a plausible excuse for passively allowing Europeans to believe as they please, but you will not pretend to say that ignorant idolators keep the laws of the Naochidæ, since there is not one of them they do not live in the constant violation of. Some Jewish journalists speak of "the vocation of Israel to the nations;" but how that vocation is fulfilled I am quite at a loss to discover. Some may be disposed to say, in excuse, "we are still so far in bondage to the Gentiles that if we made any religious movement beyond our own community, they would be alarmed, and might deprive us of some of the civil and religious privileges we now possess." If the promulgation of truth be a duty in the sight of God, if it be your "vocation to the nations," this is no excuse for neglecting a duty so urgent. Your Jewish brethren, who first promulgated the gospel, the "good message" of salvation, through Jesus Christ,

* The seven prohibitory laws of the Noachidæ, according to Jewish authorities, are the following:—"Idolatry, concupiscence, murder, robbery, feasting on the limbs of a living animal, emasculation, heterogeneous procreation."

counted not their lives dear unto themselves, but endured the loss of all things—yea, of life itself, that they might proclaim to ignorant and guilty sinners the forgiving love of God in Christ Jesus. The plain truth is,—a truth to which the conscience of every Jew who reads these pages will bear witness,—that faith in your own religion is nearly extinct—it has but a very slender hold over you. You believe in the past history of your nation; but as for your religion and its keystone, the Messiah, you really do not know what to make of them. The long degradation of Israel among the nations you know and feel; but Israel's future glory, as set forth in the prophets, is a dream and a riddle to you. Oh! how emphatically may you all take up the language of the psalmist, and say, "We see not our signs; there is no more any prophet; neither is there among us any that knoweth how long." (Psalm lxxiv 9.) And why has the wisdom of your wise men departed? Because ye have "rejected and despised" Him whom God hath sent; ye "have hid, as it were, your faces from Him" (Isa. liii. 3); and having turned away from Him, who is the light of the world, ye

"grope like the blind, and stumble at noonday." (Isa. lix. 10.) Oh that ye knew the efficacy of that prayer—"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law!" (Psalm cxix. 18.)

Nothing can be more unlike than God's ways and man's ways, of bringing about any purposed work. Man impatiently rushes along the nearest road, and sometimes heedlessly destroys in his progress that which is more valuable than the object he aims at; but He who "knows the end from the beginning," carries on His plans in a way we cannot fathom; bringing about great results from most unlikely causes, and seeming to stop short, or even to turn back, at the very crisis where we would press eagerly forward. How long delayed was the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, "I will make of thee a great nation!" Nearly forty years elapsed between the first promise and the birth of Isaac; and Isaac was married twenty years before he had any child. Then came the long captivity in Egypt; and when Moses was raised up to be a deliverer, the ignorance and unbelief of his sorely oppressed brethren delayed the com-

mencement of efforts for their deliverance for forty years. But for all these delays there were good and wise reasons, which, in some cases, our gracious Father has condescended to explain to us; and to meet the others, has given us a general rule that may satisfy us in all our inquiries—"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Pet. iii. 9.) In the time of Abraham "the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full." (Gen. xv. 16.) We know not what warnings and expostulations the evil nations that inhabited Canaan may have had; we know not how many among them may have repented, and "died in faith" during the four hundred years' further probation allotted them; but we are desired to "account that the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation" (2 Pet. iii. 15.); that "the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, leadeth to repentance" (Rom. ii. 4.); and we may therefore believe that there have been "remnants according to the election of grace," added to the family of God, out of

many "kindreds, and tongues, and peoples, and nations," of whose spiritual history no record has been given us. Far be it from me to represent God as a being so weakly benevolent as to treat the righteous and the wicked alike; to confound sin and holiness, and utter threatenings which He never means to inflict; but I must speak of God as He speaks of Himself—as one who hath "no pleasure in the death of the wicked," who is "not willing that any should perish." And when we are thoroughly convinced that the God of all power and might is also the God of love, we can afford to suspend our judgment in regard to many of those "terrible things in righteousness" that we meet with in Scripture history, or behold in the world around us; assuredly believing that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

It is interesting to view the history of Joseph as typical of that of Jesus Christ the Messiah. Hated by His brethren; betrayed and sold by them; exalted to be a prince and deliverer, and in that character making himself known unto them; as in the latter days, Jesus, the Great Deliverer, shall make Himself known

unto His brethren according to the flesh, the Jews, who shall then look upon Him whom they have pierced, and mourn. (Zech. xii. 10.) But into this, and the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt by Moses, I do not now enter, because the prominent features of both these transactions are typical of the work which the Messiah shall perform at His second coming in glory, and can therefore be better treated of in connection with the predictions of the latter prophets on this subject.

I must, however, take a glance, in passing, at one remarkable passage in the conclusion of the song sung by the children of Israel, after their deliverance at the Red Sea, because it affords a good example of passing from the immediate deliverance, to that state of glory and peace which is to succeed the ultimate deliverance, entirely passing over all the intermediate vicissitudes. "Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance; in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." (Exod. xv. 17, 18.) Here we have not

only that mountain spoken of as prepared and ready, which more than four centuries after was still covered with the lame and blind idols of the Jebusites; but we have the sanctuary, the *Mikdosh* mentioned, which, it is said, God had made for Himself to dwell in, in which He will "reign for ever and ever." How poor would the fulfilment seem in comparison with the glorious promise, should we confine it to the abode of the Shechinah in the Temple of Solomon; which temple was forsaken by five-sixths of the nation a few years after its completion! No; we must look for the fulfilment of this at the time when the "tabernacle of God is with men;" and when his "sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." (Ezek. xxxvii. 27, 28; Rev. xxi. 3.)

The dealings of God with the children of Israel in the wilderness are such a fruitful theme for spiritual meditation, that it is difficult to restrain one's observations within reasonable limits. It is not Jewish pride, but the Spirit of God that declares, "What nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them; and what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all

this law, which I set before you this day." (Deut. iv. 7, 8.) When we consider Israel's vocation to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," and God's declaration that He "will dwell among the children of Israel," and contrast these with Israel's history from that day to the present time, we are constrained to look for another state of things, in which these grand designs of God shall be accomplished, and not, as they appear at present, frustrated and abandoned. If my brethren of the house of Israel would seriously contemplate their vocation—their true spiritual vocation—it might lead them to see what a mighty change must come over them before they are in a condition to be "a kingdom of priests;" a change not of outward circumstances, nor of intellectual cultivation, but of the heart and affections; and what can any mere human Messiah do towards effecting this?

In examining God's dealings with Israel in the wilderness, the two points to which I shall confine myself at present are, the doctrine of the atonement, and the promises of the Messiah made to Israel in the wilderness. No Jew can deny the truth of the Apostle's assertion, that

"almost all things are by the law purged [purified] with blood." (Heb. ix. 22.) Now *blood* is by no means a natural symbol of purity. Apart from any acquired association, to sprinkle a thing with blood would rather suggest the idea of defilement. On no other supposition but that of an expiatory sacrifice, has the symbol of blood any significance whatsoever; and, as I have already stated, except on the supposition that man is fallen, guilty, and obnoxious to punishment, the continual slaughter of innocent animals is mere disgusting cruelty, altogether unlike the wise and merciful commands of God. He who desired that the "mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn" should not be muzzled, would not have commanded nor countenanced such an expenditure of animal life, if the greatness of the occasion, the immense importance of the instruction to be derived from it, did not call for such a departure from ordinary procedure. The revolting nature of the act of taking away life, under no impulse of fear, necessity, or gain, was well calculated to teach man what an evil thing sin is, and how displeasing it must be in the sight of a holy God. And here I may offer a word,

in passing, to those students of prophecy who can understand it: will not a due consideration of this go far to explain the difficulties in Ezek. xliii.—xlvi.? At a period when death will be so rare, and bloodshed almost, or altogether unknown, may not some retrospective rite like this, be needful to explain to the men of that dispensation the glorious work of the Redeemer; to give them some idea of what is meant by the Messiah "pouring out his soul unto death?" (Isa. liii. 12.)

Surely if any doctrine was plainly taught to Israel in the wilderness, it was the doctrine of the fallen and corrupt state of human nature; and the doctrines of atonement and substitution that necessarily flow from it. Whence arose the whole system of ceremonial uncleanness, but from the corruption of humanity? Why did acts and infirmities of men, things not in themselves sinful, require a sin-offering and an atonement, but to teach man, that in his natural state all his acts are accompanied by sin, and that the entrance of sin into the creation of God, is the cause of all infirmity and sickness? "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And why does not death instantly follow

the commission of sin? Because God is gracious unto man, and saith, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom for him." (Job xxxiii. 24.) The ransom or atonement, כפר, through which sinful man was delivered, was thus known in the early days of Job. This ancient patriarch, fearful that his sons might have sinned unknown to him, "offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all." (Job i. 5.) If the notion of *substitution* was not implied in this,—if the slaughtered animal was not a vicarious atonement, foreshadowing Him on whom God "hath laid the iniquities of us all" (Isa. liii. 6.), what was it? Must the sacrifices be viewed in the light of *payment* to God; or are they mere unmeaning ceremonies, signifying nothing at all?

The sixteenth chapter of Leviticus is a very troublesome document to my unconverted brethren, and to certain others who falsely call themselves Christians, while at the same time they are desirous to get rid of the doctrine of substitution and atonement, and of the doctrine of original corruption, upon which these are based. It is difficult to understand how those

who cannot see substitution in this chapter, can see any meaning in any part of Scripture. Before Aaron could enter on the service of the day of atonement, he was obliged to offer a bullock as a sin-offering for himself and his house; and when he was thus *covered*, כפר, from Divine wrath by the blood of atonement, he then proceeded to make an atonement for the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, "because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins." (Lev. xvi. 16.) Such is the evil and defiling nature of sin, that God represents it as contaminating all with which it comes in contact. But no one supposes that actual defilement was communicated to these inanimate things by thus remaining among the children of Israel "in the midst of their uncleanness." It was an *imputation* of uncleanness, put upon inert matter, the more strongly to impress upon moral and responsible agents a sense of their guilt and unholiness—of their moral and spiritual pollution in the sight of a holy God.

How striking to the Israelite of that day, thus humbled under a sense of his vileness,

taught that his touch, yea, his very vicinity, communicated pollution, to see the entire removal of his guilt by the scape-goat! If any symbolical act could represent any idea, or convey any truth clearly and unambiguously, this type of the scape-goat clearly taught the doctrine of the imputation of the sins of the guilty to the innocent, of the substitution of the innocent for the guilty, and of the "taking away of sin" by this substitution. "And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat; and Aaron shall lay his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, PUTTING THEM UPON THE HEAD OF THE GOAT; and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness; and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a land of separation." (Lev. xvi. 20—22.)

The Israelite thus learnt—not that sin, evil and polluting as it is, excites no displeasure in God, and involves no penalty—but that God, in His infinite wisdom and love, had devised a

way by which sinful man may be delivered both from the penalty and the power of sin, had provided a Redeemer, who should "come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob;" and in those daily, and monthly, and annual sacrifices, shadowed forth the "good things to come" hereafter, through the person and work of the Messiah. Let my brethren compare the above passage relating to the scape-goat, with Isa. liii.; especially with verses 4—6, 11—"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chatisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord HATH LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." How aptly did the two goats, which formed but one type, prefigure the great work of redeeming love: atonement by the shedding

of blood, and the entire taking away of sin by substitution! What a striking type of Him who "put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. ix. 26.); who "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God!" (1 Pet. iii. 18.)

I now proceed to notice the promises of the Messiah made to Israel in the wilderness.

After the children of Israel had journeyed about six weeks in the wilderness, guided and sustained by the God of Abraham, they came to the Desert of Sinai, and encamped before the mount. Then the Lord entered with them into that conditional covenant which was entirely distinct from His covenant with Abraham. "If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people; for all the earth is mine; and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exod. xix. 5, 6). These words were conveyed by Moses to the children of Israel, and they answered: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." But when they beheld "Sinai altogether on a smoke," when there were "thunders and lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding

loud," their self-confidence vanished; they trembled and were afraid. They cried out, "Why should we die? for this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die. Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee. Speak then with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." (Deut. v. 24—27; Exod. xx. 19.)

This natural fear of the Israelites, which finds an echo in every one's bosom, illustrates a ruling impulse of fallen humanity—dread of God. The invitation to covenant at Sinai, was coupled with no threatenings; it was one calculated to inspire confidence and love. But the natural heart of man, though it can pay reverential homage to God at a distance—nay, can even imagine that it loves God, while it views Him as afar off, yet shrinks with terror from close contact with Him. A feeling of alienation, a general sense of guilt, even when no specific crime presents itself, compels man to shun too near communication with a God who he knows cannot look upon iniquity without

abhorrence. "Let not God speak with us, lest we die!" This is the cry, not of Israel alone, but of fallen humanity.

The Israelites were here brought to learn an important lesson—they learned what the feelings of Adam and Eve were when they first realized their alienation from God. When, after their disobedience, the voice of God was heard in the Garden of Eden, that voice which had hitherto inspired no sentiments save those of love and joy, they ran and hid themselves, afraid of His presence; and this was the same lesson the Israelites learnt before Sinai, that they were not able to meet with God and live. Instead of upbraiding them with their distrust, God recognises the feeling as inevitable in their condition as fallen creatures. He declares that "they have well said all that they have spoken." (Deut. v. 28.) When man, in his natural state, can contemplate without dread a direct meeting with God, it is a sure sign that it is not the God revealed in Scripture that he worships, but a God of his own imagination; a God who weighs human actions, not in the unerring balance of truth, but in the fluctuating scale of man's expediency.

And why did not God upbraid them with their distrustful dread? why did He not resent this doubt of the love of Him "who bare them on eagle's wings, and brought them unto Himself?" Because He recognised in their piteous exclamation "Let not God speak with us, lest we die," the cry of fallen humanity for a mediator; its involuntary confession of guilt and helplessness, and its need of a "days-man" between itself and its Maker, "who can lay his hands upon both." (Job. ix. 33.)

My Jewish brethren will no doubt deny this. But is it not true that Israel desired a mediator? Was not Moses a mediator? And if Israel could not meet with God at Sinai without a mediator, how shall fallen and sinful man meet with Him at any time without a mediator? Will it be alleged that it was only the outward accompaniments of the Divine presence that terrified the Israelites,—the thunders, the lightnings, and the sound of the trumpet waxing louder and louder? Surely not; it was the knowledge that God was there, which made these sounds so awful. God would never have said of a request dictated by a childish fear of physical phenomena, "They have well

said all that they have spoken." That which terrified Israel would have terrified every son of Adam. Now the terror which a visible manifestation of God calls forth, is a sure indication of the latent terror of contact with God, which lurks in every unrenewed heart. For is not God as really near at all times, as when manifested in the terrors of Sinai: and is there not a day coming when all must be brought into the immediate presence of God?

But however the general conclusion may be denied, it is undeniable that the Israelites cried out for a mediator, and that Moses was their mediator. He was their intercessor, as well as the medium of communication between them and God. Was this office quite an anomaly; was it something needful to Israel in the wilderness, and unnecessary for them and all others, in all other places and times? Moses, guided by Divine inspiration, expressly contradicts this idea. He declares that he was but the type of a greater Mediator and Intercessor, whose word was to be law; implicit obedience to whom was commanded on pain of God's displeasure.

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto

thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken, according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deut. xviii. 15—19.)

That this refers to the Messiah, the promised Deliverer, could only be denied by those who fear that its admission would tell too powerfully on the claims of Jesus of Nazareth. That it cannot apply to Joshua, as some Jewish writers allege, is evident, from Deut. xxxiv. 10, which must have been written either in Joshua's time, or subsequent to it: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses." Their well-known saying, in regard to Maimo-

nides,* is a confession that there is no individual to whom they can point as the "prophet like unto Moses." To say that the passage means a succession of prophets, such as the Jewish nation was favoured with, is to destroy all accuracy of language. If the above clear and distinct reference to an individual may be interpreted to mean a succession of individuals, it would be impossible to maintain that any individual was either spoken of, or prophesied of, in Scripture. The prophet that is here promised is not an ordinary prophet, like those who were afterwards raised up to instruct Israel in their immediate duties, and to predict the future dealings of God with them, but it is a prophet that can answer the demand of Israel when they stood before Horeb; one who can be the mediator between God and them; who can ascend into the presence of God, in the midst of the fire, and commune with Him "face to face."

Moses had hitherto been the guide and leader of Israel, but they had now chosen him

* It was said of Moses Ben Maimon, that "from Moses to Moses their arose not a Moses."

as their mediator, and God had ratified their choice. We shall, therefore, proceed to examine the nature of this new relationship, and the duties that grow out of it.

After the giving of the law, which the Apostle Paul is instructed by the Holy Spirit to call "the ministration of condemnation" (2 Cor. iii. 9), Moses had to act in another capacity, distinct from, yet intimately connected with, his mediatorial office. He had to act as the priest, the atoner for sin. He again summoned Israel to appear before Sinai; he took sacrifices, and offered up burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. He took the blood of these offerings and sprinkled the half of it upon the altar, and with the rest he sprinkled the people and the book of the covenant. He thereby showed not only that they could not draw nigh unto God without a mediator, but that a mediator alone cannot suffice, unless he be also an atoner for their sins, unless he can sprinkle upon them atoning blood. That fiery law, which "was ordained to life," which was calculated to promote, if adhered to, the creature's life and well-being, Moses knew would be but a "ministration of death" to

corrupt and fallen man; so that it was not enough that he should be the medium through whom these commands were conveyed to them; it was also needful that he should be able to atone for those sins which the breach of these commandments would involve.

In the interpretation of the types of Scripture, I am disposed to think much confusion has arisen from expecting to find in the antitype the same degree of separateness that appears in the type. When he offered up the sacrifices at the foot of Horeb, Moses himself, and the blood of the victims, formed but one type, the type of that Prophet, like unto Him, who was at once to be priest and offering. In like manner, when Aaron and his sons were ordained to the priest's office, they, together with Moses, formed but one type of the Messiah. And why? Because no man was able to combine, in himself, even the shadow of the various excellencies that were requisite in Him who was to be the Deliverer not of Israel only, but of humanity. Moses piteously confesses his inability to bear the burden and responsibility of his office. He cries unto the Lord, "Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy

servant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me." (Num. xi. 11—14.)

Moses had not long been chosen by the people as their mediator, until he was called upon to perform another branch of his mediatorial work. He had been the medium of communication between God and the people; he had offered up sacrifices for the sin of Israel; he was now to act as the intercessor, as the pleader with God that He would forgive their sins.

I believe most readers of the Pentateuch are conscious of a feeling as if the follies of the children of Israel were almost incredible; as if the sin of making the golden calf, so soon after the awful transaction at Sinai, were next to impossible. This delusion, I am convinced, arises from not taking into account the effect produced on our own minds by the brevity of the narrative. The history of the golden calf seems the key to the explanation of all idolatry. It is evident the people of Israel viewed Moses as the visible representative of God; and fear-

ing he had left them altogether, they desired Aaron to make another visible representation of God ("make us an *Elohim*"), which should go before them. It is impossible to imagine that any people, even in a state of the most savage ignorance, could believe that a little image which had no existence until their earrings were melted to form it, could be the identical Being that brought them out of Egypt about three months previously. They, with all other originators of image-worship, must have viewed it simply as a representation of the invisible God. That the mass of their successors, however, worshipped the idol as being itself the Deity, all history proves;* and it was doubtless this natural tendency of the human mind to worship the visible, that caused the prohibition against making images to stand immediately after the command to have no God but Jehovah. The formation of the

* The persons spoken of in Isaiah xliv. were probably not the *originators* of idolatrous worship, but merely the renewers or multipliers of idols where they had long existed. In this case it is probable that the very few, out of the mass, who thought at all, supposed there was an inhabitation by the Deity, or an infusion of power, into the new idol after its formation.

golden calf was a direct breach of the second commandment; they made an image, and bowed down before it. True, they proclaimed a feast to Jehovah; but had He occupied their minds when they were engaged in worship, they would not have "risen up to play." Who that has lived much in a Popish country, can read this account of the Israelites, without being reminded of the union of superstition and frivolous gaiety that is so often to be seen there? The gaudy procession (mis-named *religious*) is naturally followed by the thoughtless revel. And if we look nearer home, we shall find that devotion to religious forms and devotion to worldly fashions are often united in the same person.

While Moses was engaged in intimate communion with the Lord, who spake to him "face to face as a man speaketh with his friend," this delightful intercourse was interrupted by the painful intimation of Israel's guilt. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people: now,

therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make of thee a great nation." Ah! how many there are who would willingly have said, Amen, to such a proposal! Moses could not be insensible to the honour of being progenitor of the chosen people of God; and this would still have been a fulfilment of the promise to Abraham, only with this difference, that the line of descent would commence with the younger son of one of the descendants of Levi, instead of the younger son of Isaac. But there was something dearer to the heart of Moses than his own honour—the honour of his God. "And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore, should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swearest by thine own self, and

saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people." (Exod. xxxii. 7—14).

I pretend not to explain how, or in what sense, the Lord repented and changed His intentions; I take the Scripture narrative simply as I find it. From the time of Abraham and onwards, we find the Lord accessible to the intercession of His people. What a relief it is to turn from the tortuous theology of those who, under cover of what they are pleased to term "the immutability of God's purposes," at once deprive man of his responsibility, and God of His love and tenderness, to the simple and honest declarations of Scripture! Doubtless, the inspired penmen believed in the "sovereignty of God," as firmly as these more modern divines — nay, more firmly: for they are so strong in the consciousness of its truth, that they are not afraid of its being impugned, and, therefore, they make their statements in a plain and straightforward manner. The ground-work of the theology of the school

we allude to, seems to be, "The Lord delighteth in condemnation;" whereas, the Scripture saith, He "delighteth in mercy." True, He executeth judgment from time to time; but it is "His strange work;" and if we could see the end from the beginning, we should see that judgment is in order to mercy—judgment to the few, in mercy to the many.

From this time until the day of his death, the great and distinguishing work of Moses was his mediatorial work; in after times they had other leaders and commanders; other priests; other prophets; but never had they again such a mediator.

What a picture of human nature does the history of the children of Israel present! The Lord "bare them on eagle's wings;" delivered them in every emergency; and yet, when each new trial came, they enacted the same unbelieving and rebellious part. Well might Moses say unto them, "Ye have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you." "How oft," says the royal Psalmist, "did they provoke him in the wilderness, and grieve him in the desert! Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and

limited the Holy One of Israel. They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy." "They forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red Sea. Therefore, he said, that he would destroy them, had not Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the breach to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them." (Ps. lxxviii. 40—42; cvi. 21—23.)

When the consuming fire of the Lord came upon them at Taberah, to punish their murmuring and discontent, "the people cried unto Moses, and when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched." (Num. xi. 2.) When an evil report was brought of the promised land, they again complained and said, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt!" "And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they." But the mediator

was again faithful to his office, and urged his former plea with yet more earnestness—"Then the Egyptians shall hear it, and they will tell it to the inhabitants of the land;" and so he goes on, pleading that God's gracious presence with His people, that He is seen by them face to face, and that His cloud is over them, is known by report to these inhabitants; and that if He should destroy this people the nations would say, "Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which He sware unto them, therefore, He hath slain them in the wilderness. Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word." (Num. xiv. 11—20.) When the people gathered against Moses and Aaron, and upbraided them with having "killed the people of the Lord," God commanded them to remove from among the congregation, that He might consume the murmurers in a moment. But Moses desired Aaron to take fire from the altar, and make an atonement for the people; in order that the wrath of the Lord might be

stayed. Again, when "the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way, they spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in this wilderness; for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth this light bread?" The fiery serpents brought the people to a sense of their sins, and they again appealed to their mediator, "Pray unto the Lord that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people." (Num. xxi. 4—7.)

I have placed together these various instances of the mediatorial character of Moses before my brethren, that they may the more easily apprehend the character of the Prophet "like unto Moses;" that they may perceive that the work of atonement and intercession was the distinguishing feature of the character and office of their early guide; even as they were to be the distinguishing characteristics of their Messiah. Now as the mediatorial character of Moses is undeniable, what becomes of the assertion so oft repeated in Jewish writings, that an atonement and a mediator are alike unnecessary? The whole history of Israel

seems recounted with such detail, for the express purpose of exhibiting the absolute necessity of both. Was there any difference between the nature of Israel while in the wilderness, and that of the rest of mankind, that Israel needed a mediator then, and that neither Israel nor any one else needs a mediator now? The Jews often ask the question: "If Jesus were the Messiah, why did our fathers reject him?" Did they not reject Moses,—not merely at first, but time after time, although God had repeatedly shown that He was with him? Did they not reject the prophets of God? Never has any true reformer appeared, who has not been rejected by the many, and received only by the few. And they must remember that although the Jewish nation as such, rejected Jesus, many thousands of Jews received him; and that Christianity subsisted, and flourished, and spread, for eleven years before there was a single Gentile convert.

But while Moses was a lively type of the true Mediator and Intercessor, he at the same time showed forth the weakness and insufficiency of a mere human agent. It requires the patience of a God to bear with the multiplied

provocations of fallen man. The meekest of men, who had stood so many trials of his patience, at last gave way. At the waters of Meribah he dishonoured God by impatience and unbelief; and on this account was not permitted to enter the promised land. This was a striking lesson to Israel of the inadequacy of a merely human Messiah, of a fallible mediator. This showed that the successful intercession of Moses rested not on his own merits, but on the merits of that Mediator of the covenant, whose love to fallen sinners formed the groundwork of Moses' intercession.

To the superficial reader of Scripture, the history of the children of Israel, from their departure out of Egypt, till their establishment as a kingdom under Saul, appears but the annals of a people in a semi-barbarous, and almost a childish state. But to those who are able, under all the phases which society presents, to perceive the workings of a common humanity, it is an instructive chapter of the history of man. It is a picture of human nature divested of the flimsy and glittering veil that the world's refinement throws over it. Is not the general course of the world still, a forget-

fulness of God in prosperity; a hasty appeal to Him for help in the time of adversity; and forgetfulness again, when the judgment is removed? And what are all men around us so busily toiling for? What is it that prompts the labour of the merchant, and urges the student to his midnight task? It is the desire of obtaining the good things of this life. And what is it they weep over, when their efforts are unsuccessful, or when a sudden reverse has deprived them of their wealth? Is it, that they can no longer love and be loved; that they can no longer do good to their fellow-creatures; that they can no longer honour and serve God? No; the things whose loss they mourn are as ignoble as the good things of Egypt after which the children of Israel wept. In their honest simplicity they confessed what it was they mourned: "We remember the fish, and the cucumbers, and the melons." Men are less honest now, because more enlightened; they feel that the things on which their daily happiness depends, are not the things that *ought* to form the happiness of a rational and immortal being; therefore, by general consent they do not name "the fish, and the cucum-

bers," and all the other luxuries of the establishment; but each is conscious that these, and such as these, are really the good things that their souls lust after. Israel is man under the dominion of the fall; and the work of the Messiah is to deliver men from all the consequences of the fall; to bring them "from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

I might proceed from the Pentateuch through the subsequent records of Israel's history, through the Psalms of David, and the greater and minor prophets, and trace in them all the same features; the same recognition of the evil state of man and his habitation; the same hope of redemption to both through a Deliverer. But this examination would far exceed my limits; I must content myself with directing the attention of my readers to a few of the more prominent points; leaving them to pursue the investigation more fully themselves.

I have hitherto chiefly considered the moral and social renovation of man; I shall now notice a few of those passages of Scripture that conjoin with these—the renovation of this

earth to the "very good" state in which God created it.

We have seen, that there was an early expectation of some one who should "comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." (Gen. v. 29.) It is interesting to trace this expectation, that the ground, the אדמה, *adumah*, the soil, should one day be delivered from the curse pronounced on it for the sin of our first parents; which expectation mingles itself in all the visions of the future that gladdened the hearts of the prophets of old. They knew, as the Apostle Paul expresses it, that "the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him that subjected the same; in hope that the creation itself, also, shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom. viii. 20, 21.)

It is a strange notion of the omnipotence of God to suppose that He made a world which He considered "very good," and that Satan so marred it, that God needed to destroy it, and blot it out of His creation! Is this consistent either with the wisdom or the power of God?

If He has seen fit to provide a remedy for the evil caused by Satan to one portion of His very good work—the spirit of man—why should it be thought a strange thing, that the remedy should also extend to the material portion of the work, which was, equally with the other, pronounced "very good;" a thing right, proper, and suitable to exist? Shall we dare to say that Satan has in this point foiled God, and has made that which God pronounced good, so irreparably evil, that it must needs be destroyed, and exist no longer?

It is sometimes maintained, that the popular notion of God utterly destroying the earth, and taking the righteous to dwell elsewhere, in a place called heaven, is, even if an error, a very harmless one; because it does not signify where we are to be hereafter, so that we dwell in the immediate presence of God, where alone is happiness. There can be no question as to the pre-eminent importance of ascertaining the way in which future happiness is to be attained; but when this all-important question is settled, we are not desired indolently to fold our hands, and to say, This suffices me, I will keep solely to these first principles of the

doctrine of Christ. On the contrary, we are told to "go on unto perfection." (Heb. vi. 1), and to "add to our faith, knowledge." In proportion as our views are scriptural, they will be influential; in proportion as they are distinct and well defined, in the same proportion will the impression they make be vivid and abiding. It is treason against the God of truth, to say, that error may answer our purpose as well as truth.

But the banishment of matter out of God's creation, as an essentially sinful thing, has not been harmless. It has rendered the glorious doctrine of the resurrection of the body a mere inert dogma; held, indeed, theoretically, but practically a dead letter, exercising no influence over the affections and hopes of the Christian. The happiness of the disembodied spirit is all that is contemplated; and whether that spirit is again to rejoin the body or not, is a matter of comparative, if not absolute indifference to a very large portion of the church of Christ. In the days of the apostles it was not so; the happiness of the disembodied spirit is but slightly alluded to, as being preferable to the toilsome warfare of the

Christian life; but the "blessed hope" that animated the hearts of the early believers, was "the glorious appearing of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." (Titus ii. 13. Philip iii. 21.) The apostles preached "Jesus and the resurrection;" the moderns seem to think the second of these topics superfluous.

When man came originally from the hands of his Creator, this earth was the abode which the all-wise Creator thought suitable for him; it was made for him, and he was invested with the dominion of it. He fell by transgression, and lost the dominion. A Deliverer was promised. Now, suppose the details of what this Deliverer was to accomplish, had never been given, would it have been very unreasonable to expect that, besides delivering the soul of man from the disease of sin, He was also to regain for man his lost dominion over the earth, and enable him, we may reverently say, to carry on God's original plan, which sin had interrupted? Such an expectation regarding the work of the Messiah would have been natural and reasonable. But we are not left to reason

on the subject. I maintain that it is expressly declared, that this restoration of the lost dominion, this renovation of the earth, form part of the work of the Redeemer; and this I shall now proceed to prove from various portions of Scripture.

Christ, the second Adam, is to regain all that the first Adam lost. He is to be not only "King of saints," but "King over all the earth." There is not a prophecy of Messiah in the Old Testament that is not connected with this dominion. The testimonies to this truth are so numerous, that selection is the only difficulty. When the psalmist is contemplating the wonderful dignity to which the Almighty has raised man, in having given him dominion over the works of God's hands, and having put all things under his feet, we are taught by the apostle that He is contemplating a state of things that has not yet been attained. "We see not yet all things put under Him," is the declaration of the Spirit through Paul. (Heb. ii. 8.) "But we see Jesus," the second Adam, the representative, and new head of humanity "who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory

and honour," (Heb. ii. 9), sitting at the right hand of the Father until He comes to take possession of the dominion He has gained. And what is the kingdom He has gained? The dominion of the earth. "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Ps. ii. 7, 8.)

The promise made to David of a son who should sit on his throne, was of a much larger kind than was or could be fulfilled in the person of his son Solomon. Let us examine it in detail. When David had it in his heart to build a house for the name of the Lord, a message was sent to him from God by the Prophet Nathan, forbidding him to build the house, but giving him "exceeding great and precious promises." "It shall come to pass when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me a house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy

away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee; but I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever; and his throne shall be established for evermore." (1 Chron. xvii. 11—15.) At the reception of this message, David sat down before the Lord, astonished at His goodness, and said, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And yet this was a small thing in thine eyes, O God; for thou hast also spoken of thy servant's house for a long while to come [למרחוק, to a far-distant period], and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree,* O Lord God. What can David speak more to thee for the honour of thy servant?" Before concluding David's speech, I must return to another portion of God's promise, which relates, not to David's seed as Ruler of Israel, but to Israel as a nation:—"I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the children of wickedness waste them any

* I question much whether "a man of high degree" is all that is implied in האדם המעלה, *the exalted man.*

more as at the beginning." In allusion to this part of God's promise, David says, "What one nation in the earth is like thy people Israel, whom God went to redeem to be His own people, to make thee a name of greatness and terribleness, by driving out nations from before thy people, whom thou hast redeemed out of Egypt? For thy people Israel didst thou make thine own people for ever; and thou, Lord, becamest their God. Therefore now, Lord, let the thing that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house be established for ever, and do as thou hast said; let it even be established that thy name may be magnified for ever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God of Israel, even a God to Israel; and let the house of David thy servant be established before thee. For thou, O my God, hast told thy servant that thou wilt build him an house; therefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray before thee. And now, Lord, thou art God, and hast promised this goodness unto thy servant; now, therefore, let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may be before thee for ever; for thou blessest, O Lord, and

it shall be blest for ever." (1 Chron. xvii. 9, 16, 17.)

Those who maintain that the history of the Jews as a nation is ended, and that Christ is never to sit on the throne of His father David, would do well to consider this remarkable portion of Scripture. If David had looked into the history of his descendants, had seen that ten of the twelve tribes would revolt from his grandson, and never again be under the rule of his family; had he forseen that, in a few centuries, five-sixths of Israel were to be driven out and lost; and in a few centuries more the remainder was to be scattered to the four winds of heaven, to become a reproach and a bye-word in all nations of the earth; if he saw this, and no more than this, would not his utterances have been those of grief and lamentation, rather than of joyful and triumphant praise? What shall we say, then—that the Lord deceived David? That the God of truth said He would establish the throne of the seed of David for ever, that He would ordain a place for His people Israel where they should dwell, and be moved no more, when He all the while intended in a

few centuries to put an end at once to the Jewish nation and David's throne? God forbid that we should thus dare to tamper with the promises of the Almighty, of Him who cannot lie. No; in mercy to the weakness of humanity, the nearer calamities were hid from David's eyes; and he was carried beyond the present dispensation to that glorious time when his seed, the promised Messiah, "shall take unto him his great power and reign;" when He shall be at once "King of Israel," and "King of the whole earth."

The glorious vision here afforded to the royal psalmist was, from this time forth, the delightful theme of his songs of praise. Every victory, every deliverance, carried him in spirit beyond the passing event to the future glory, when "the wicked shall not be," when the evil-doers shall be cut off, and those that wait upon the Lord shall inherit the earth" (Ps. xxxvii. 9, 10), and "the Lord shall be King over all the earth." (Zech. xiv. 9.) In these visions, the restoration of the earth to its primeval fruitfulness is always conjoined with the reign of the Messiah over it. When He "judges the people righteously," "then

shall the earth yield her increase" (Ps. lxvii. 4, 6); when "He cometh to judge the earth," then "the field, and all that is therein," is joyful, and "all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord." (Ps. xcvi. 12, 13.)

The seventy-second Psalm is an interesting example of David being led from the contemplation of Solomon and his kingdom, to the higher theme of Messiah and His universal kingdom of peace and blessedness. The two themes are at first so blended together, that we only discover that something more than Solomon's kingdom is meant, by the loftiness of the strain; but towards the end the strain rises so high, that Solomon's kingdom is entirely lost sight of; and the heavenly kingdom that is to endure for ever, when the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell with them, fills the eye and heart of the departing psalmist. "His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in Him; all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name for ever; and let the whole

earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended." (Ps. lxxii. 17—20.)

That David thus looked beyond his immediate posterity to that illustrious descendant who should be "born King of the Jews" (Matt. ii. 2), we have the most direct Scripture testimony. Peter, expressly alluding to the passage in 1st Chronicles I have given above, states, that David, being a prophet, knew "that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." (Acts ii. 30.) This is the only key to David's song of joyful praise at the announcement made to him. He had had a turbulent life; he and his people Israel had spent their days amid "wars and rumours of wars;" but the Lord granted him a vision of a kingdom of eternal peace, where "Israel shall dwell safely," ruled over by Christ, "the Lord our righteousness," who shall be "King for ever and ever." What wonder, that, with such Scriptures in their hands, the early disciples should cry out, when Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem, "Blessed be the kingdom of

our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord!" (Mark xi. 10.) At Christ's birth it was expressly declared by an inspired prophet that "the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David." Was David's throne in heaven? Or was it in the hearts of men? Oh that men would take the words of God in their honest simplicity; that instead of severing the future happiness of the glorified church from the future happiness of the earth under the reign of Christ, they would see the close relationship in which they stand to each other! Why try to contemplate being blessed with Christ, in some indefinite region of space, far removed from earth and its concerns, instead of embracing the scriptural declaration that we are to be "joint-heirs" with Christ in the inheritance of the "nations and the uttermost parts of the earth" (Ps. ii. 8), over which we are to reign with Him? If such glorious expectations were a fanciful theory, based on obscure and doubtful texts, we might well be reproached with presumption; but it is the consistent declaration of all Scripture, which, thus interpreted according to its plain and literal meaning, makes a consistent whole;

the purport of which is to lead us to look for, and hasten unto, the coming of the day of God (2 Peter iii. 12); and to pray with earnest longing "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."

Among the secondary causes that have contributed to the rejection of Christianity by the Jews, a very prominent one is, the misinterpretations of the Old Testament Scriptures, that have prevailed so generally as to give them an impression that such erroneous views are "part and parcel" of Christianity. Among these misinterpretations the most gross and glaring is that which asserts, that the promises made to the Jewish nation in the Scriptures delivered to them, have been all fulfilled, or are in the process of being fulfilled, to the Gentile church. The evil of such a mode of interpretation, as far as the Jews are concerned, can hardly be overrated. It is not merely their national pride that is wounded, as some maintain; it is that their sense of truth, of justice, of reverence for the Almighty, are outraged; because they feel it is directly charging the God of Israel with a lie.

I shall not repeat the arguments that have

been used in a previous part of this work* respecting the promises to Israel as a nation; but in briefly noticing the predictions respecting Messiah and His work that are contained in the prophecies of Isaiah, we shall meet with many passages of Scripture that reiterate these promises.

There was a time when it would have been very unnecessary to tell my Jewish brethren that every blessing promised them was to come in and through the Messiah. This, for a long period in their history, was never denied. But the case is now altered. Their desire to get rid of the doctrine of atonement and mediation, leads them to prefer the notion of dealing with God directly, without the intervention of a Messiah; feeling conscious that the admission of a Messiah is a great step towards the admission of a Mediator. All this, of course, is not avowed; to begin openly to deny a Messiah, when this had, for many centuries, been the leading idea of Judaism, would be very impolitic, and would greatly shock the orthodox; on this account even the most violent re-

* See "Mystery of the Gentile Dispensation."

formers do not venture to deny the doctrine of the Messiah, in words. But, though not formally denied, the doctrine is so completely kept in abeyance, both by reformed and orthodox Jews, that it is virtually abandoned. I, on the contrary, maintain with the old orthodox Jews, that all the glorious things predicted of Israel refer to "the days of the Messiah;" that every deliverance promised by God is to be wrought by the Messiah; that when he says, "I will do it," it is by His "servant, whom he upholdeth, his elect in whom his soul delighteth" (Isa. xli. 1), that He doeth it.

The early part of Isaiah's prophecy was delivered in the reign of Uzziah (or Azariah, as he is called in 2 Kings, xv.), King of Judah. When we consider the outward condition of the kingdom at the time this prophecy was given, we see how painful must the office of the seer have been; how he must have been regarded as a "man of strifes," as one who "spake parables;" and more painful then all, the message delivered to him by God for the instruction of those among whom he dwelt, must have been received by the great majority of those who heard it as the ravings of a

diseased and melancholy mind. The outward condition of Judah during the reigns of Uzziah and his son Jotham, was very prosperous. Uzziah was not only victorious over his enemies, but by his wisdom and power he brought his kingdom into a state of prosperity it had never enjoyed since the days of Solomon. He not only "built towns, and fortified them," but he cultivated the arts of peace as well as of war; "He digged many wells, for he had much cattle, both in the low country and in the plains; husbandmen also, and vine-dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel; for he loved husbandry." (2 Chron. xxvi. 10.) In the early part of his reign, he sought the Lord; "and as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper." (2 Chron. xxvi. 5.) One fatal error, however, he committed at the beginning of his reign, which was, probably the germ of all the evil that was afterwards developed; "The high places were not removed; the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places." (2 Kings xv. 4.) This root of bitterness, this mixture of true and false religion, produced in time the evil condition as to spiritual things, of which Isaiah

complains. Uzziah himself seems to have been led away from his trust in the Lord, by trusting to an arm of flesh. He had a standing army of 307,500 men, furnished with all the appliances of war; "and he made in Jerusalem engines invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense." (2 Chron. xxvi. 13—16.)

The form which Uzziah's transgression took is very remarkable. Had he been ensnared by the riches and pleasures of this life—had he multiplied his horses and chariots, and got him singing men and singing women, like Solomon, it would have been but the natural course of the fleshly mind. But why intrude into the priestly office? I think it not improbable, that Uzziah's prosperity, and the flourishing condition into which he had brought his kingdom, may have puffed him up with the

notion that he was the promised Messiah; and though it was after his time that Zechariah recorded that Messiah should be a "priest upon his throne," yet one of the inspired songs of his ancestor David, spoke of a priest "after the order of Melchizedec," who was both king and priest; and this union of the kingly, priestly, and prophetical office in the person of Messiah, was necessarily implied in his being the "prophet like unto Moses." Although Aaron and his sons were afterwards invested with the priestly office, on account of Moses' inability to bear the whole burden alone, yet, at first, Moses was at once prophet, priest, and ruler in Israel. Such, it is probable, did Uzziah now suppose himself to be.

Filled with spiritual pride and vain-glory, he entered the temple of the Lord, and boldly seized the censer. But, whatever might be the general religious declension, there was a faithful band of priests, who, in the discharge of their duty to God, knew no man after the flesh; and who would not permit even royalty itself to intrude into the affairs of God's house. "Azariah, the priest, went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord that

were valiant men; and they withstood Uzziah, the king, and said unto him, It pertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense; go out of the sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed: neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God." While a blustering contempt for all authority and control is a degrading trait in fallen humanity, a manly declaration of truth, regardless whom it may offend when the honour of God is concerned, is one of its noblest exhibitions. These "valiant men," I doubt not, willingly rendered to the Cæsar of the day the things that were Cæsar's; but they would not render to Cæsar the things that were God's. "Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense; and while he was wroth with the priests the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the incense altar. And Azariah, the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and beheld he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself also hasted to go out, because the Lord had

smitten him. And Uzziah, the king, was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house." (2 Chron. xxvi. 17—21.) Sad termination to spiritual ambition and carnal pride!

Josephus mentions, probably on the authority of some tradition, that the "earthquake in the days of Uzziah," mentioned by Zechariah and Amos (Zech. xiv. 5; Amos i. 1), took place at the time when Uzziah thus intruded into the priestly office.

Let us, now, keeping in view the condition of the kingdom of Judah at the time, proceed to glance at the first portion of Isaiah's prophecy; contained in ch. i.—v. The description he gives of the state of the people is that of being sensual and worldly, combined with a profession of religion. Their land was full of silver and gold, horses and chariots, and "pleasant pictures;" they were "lofty and haughty." And yet they offered a "multitude of sacrifices;" the Lord was "full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts." And was He satisfied with this scrupulous attention to outward observances; did He consider the ordinances He had Himself

appointed, as possessing any intrinsic value? No; he pours contempt upon them. "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting." This evil state of society brought no immediate judgment; but the eye of the seer beheld it as the cause why, some centuries after, the "country should be desolate, and the cities burnt with fire;" that "strangers should devour their land in their presence," even as it is in Judea at this day. Many vicissitudes have taken place since the days of the Prophet Isaiah; the Jews have been driven out, have returned, and been driven out again; but the prophetic eye is so riveted by the grand consummation, that it takes no note of progressive events. It overleaps all intermediate occurrences, all partial deliverances, and contemplates the time when this evil shall be purged away by the Redeemer; when Zion's "judges shall be restored as at the first, and her counsellors as at the beginning;" when she "shall be redeemed with judgment, and her returning ones with righteousness." In the days of the

prophet, the nation and the king gloried in their mighty army, equipped with "shields, and spears, and habergeons, and bows;" but the glory of the latter days was to be something very different; it was not to consist in "making war with mighty power," as Uzziah's "mighty men of valour" did, but in learning "the ways of the Lord, and walking in His paths;" and then, instead of glorying in instruments of destruction, they will "beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

I have elsewhere noticed that the prophets, in all nearer and minor events, whether of judgment or deliverance, see only the grand and final consummation. This they divide into its two great acts, the one consisting of trouble and conflict, the other of deliverance and glory; the former of these being generally called, "the great and terrible day of the Lord;" the account of which invariably terminates with a recital of the glory which is immediately to succeed it. From the beginning of ch. i. to ch. ii. 5, we have these two

subjects in the order above stated. In this instance, however, Judah's sin and punishment is dwelt on at length; while "the great day" is only briefly hinted at in ch. i. 24: "Ah! I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies." But in the following vision, which begins at ch. ii. 6, and continues to the end of ch. iv., we find the terrors of the "day of the Lord" detailed at great length; while the vision, as usual, concludes with the glory of the latter days.

It is impossible to read the account of the social state of the kingdom of Judah as narrated in Isa. iii., and again taken up and enlarged upon in ch. v., without seeing many points of resemblance to the present state of society in this country. The covetous desire to "join house to house, and lay field to field;" the sumptuous luxuriance of feasts, while men "regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operations of his hands;" and the fastidious refinement and luxurious vanity prevalent among the female part of the population, may all find a parallel in the present day, even in this land, where there is more knowlege of truth than in any country under heaven.

The *elite* of female society in the capital of Britain, may learn in the description of the "daughters of Zion" in the time of Judah's outward prosperity and glory, that excessive pride, and vanity in apparel, are mentioned among the things that bring the anger of the Lord against a nation, and precede its downfal; and the *millionaires* who pride themselves on astonishing the world by the great wealth and vast amount of houses and lands of which they are possessed, may learn from the same portion of Holy Writ, that they are not making to themselves a friend of the mammon of unrighteousness, but converting it into their own and their country's bitterest enemy.

As Uzziah mistook himself for the priestly King promised to Israel, it is probable that some of those who at that time "looked for redemption in Israel," entertained the same views in regard to him, and may have had their hopes disappointed, and their faith shaken, by his disgrace and death. To comfort such, the Lord vouchsafed a glorious vision to Isaiah, "in the year that king Uzziah died;" (Isa. vi. 1.) In this vision he "saw the Lord [אדני] sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up."

We believers in Christ, who receive the later revelation made by God to man, know that this was a manifestation of the true "priest after the order of Melchizedec," the kingly priest. (John xii. 41.) The effect of this vision upon the prophet is very remarkable. The future glory of Israel under the reign of "the King, the Lord of Hosts," when not Israel only, but the whole earth, shall be filled with His glory, was, for the time, entirely forgotten by Isaiah. An overwhelming sense of his own sinfulness, such as must ever accompany a powerful manifestation of God's glory, caused him to cry out, "Woe is me!" And what is the comfort held out to him while in this state of conscious guilt and self-abasement? Simply the Gospel—the good message of pardon through atonement. One of the seraphim touched his lips with a "live coal," part of the sacrificial fire taken from the altar, on which the atonement had been offered, and pronounced these cheering words: "Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thy iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged," or atoned for; the word translated *purged*, being כִּפֶּר, the word always used for *atone*. When thus made

sensible of forgiving love, then was the prophet ready to run in the way of God's commandments with an enlarged heart: "I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me." (Isa. vi. 8.)

The concluding prediction of this chapter is very remarkable. The Lord foretels to Isaiah the blindness and rejection of the Jews. The prophet understands the promises of God too well to suppose this rejection to be final; he therefore asks, "Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate." (11.) Such is the present state of Canaan. Is not then their term of rejection nearly accomplished; and will not the receiving of them again soon take place?

The next vision of Isaiah begins with the seventh chapter, and ends with the twelfth; the work to be accomplished by the Messiah being the chief subject of it. It begins, as usual, with trouble and confusion; and ends with universal order and blessedness. The difficulties and obscurities in this and in other

visions, I am disposed to believe, arise from the blending the events of Ahaz' reign, with those much more remote; from the judgments and deliverances to be wrought in Israel being mixed up with those general judgments, and that redemption, to be ultimately wrought out by the Messiah on the whole earth.

To enter into a critical examination of this prophecy would far exceed my limits; I can only notice the leading features of it. Ahaz, king of Judah, "did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord." When he heard that the king of Syria was confederate with the king of Israel, and that they were bent on destroying the kingdom of Judah, he was greatly discouraged. His fear arose from unbelief in the promises of the God of Israel, whom he had forsaken. An ancient prophecy was recorded in the law, that the sceptre should not depart from Judah until Shiloh should come; and, therefore, he ought not to have feared the overthrow of his kingdom before that event had taken place. God had also promised to David that his throne should be established for ever; that he should have a son, even the Messiah, of whom God said, "I

will settle him in my house and in my kingdom for ever, and his throne shall be established for evermore." (1 Chron. xvii. 14.) The Prophet Isaiah is sent to show Ahaz his folly and unbelief; and to announce to him, that so far from Israel overcoming the kingdom of Judah, Israel itself should cease to be a people within sixty-five years.

The Lord, desiring to reveal the advent of the promised Deliverer, desires Ahaz to ask a sign concerning it; which Ahaz with a false humility, something akin to that of the present day, which declares it presumption to inquire into the meaning of God's promises respecting the future, refuses to do. Therefore the Lord himself gives the sign. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name, God with us. Butter and honey shall he eat; (a common article of food in the East at the present day,) by his knowledge he shall refuse the evil and choose the good.*

* I believe this to be the true rendering of the passage, which is obscured by making his eating butter and honey appear as the cause of his knowing to refuse the evil and choose the good. The words are precisely similar to those in Isaiah liii: "By his knowledge shall my righ-

For, before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou pollutest, shall be forsaken of both her kings." (Isa. vii. 14—16.) If it be asked, Why the prophet should merely say that the destruction of the kingdom of Israel should take place before the promised Child could distinguish between good and evil, when this event was to happen several centuries before this period; I believe the only answer that can be given, is, that it did not seem good unto God that the precise time of the Messiah's birth should be made known to the men of that generation; even, as in the days of the apostles, the period of His second advent was not distinctly revealed, but was spoken of as if it might have been a much nearer event than history has shown it to be. The sign was given not to Ahaz as an individual, but to the whole nation. It was not given לך to *thee*, but לכם to *you*. I do not enter into the discussion respecting this remark-

teous servant justify many." I am also disposed to think that the mention of butter and honey is used to signify a low and poor condition. This article is much used by the poorer classes in Syria at the present day; and in the latter part of this chapter it is mentioned as the food of the land when in a desolate and impoverished condition.

able prophecy. The Jews themselves are deeply conscious that they have nothing satisfactory to urge against its strong evidence for the claims of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. According to them it refers to Isaiah's son, or to the son of Ahaz, or to the son of they know not whom, living at that time. But when was any child of king or prophet called "God with us?" And when did this merely human Immanual become possessed of the land of promise, as he is stated to be in ch. viii. 8.? Their explanations of this passage are so various, so contradictory, and so unsatisfactory to themselves, that to enter upon them is a mere waste of words.

In the remainder of the seventh chapter, and a large portion of the eighth, the nearer judgments upon the Jews form the chief theme; through which, occasionally, a glimpse of the "great and terrible day of the Lord" appears. I would particularly direct the attention of my Jewish brethren to ch. viii. 13—17. It has been frequently shown them by Christian authors, that the name יהוה צבאות, *Jehovah Tzebaoth*, the Lord of Hosts, is generally applied to the Messiah, the second Person of the

Trinity—He who appeared to Joshua as "Captain of the Lord's host." In v. 14, while this Lord of Hosts is declared to be a sanctuary to those who believe in Him, He is said to be "a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." Can any words more accurately describe what the Lord Jesus Christ has been to the Jews for the last 1800 years? Do they confess that God, the Almighty Father, has been a stone of stumbling and rock of offence to them? And if they shrink from owning such guilt and blasphemy as this, then who is that Lord of Hosts, in rejecting whom so many of them have stumbled and fallen, and been broken?

In the latter portion of the eighth chapter, there is considerable obscurity in the language, any attempt to elucidate which is beside my present subject.* But the translation of the first verse of ch. ix. in the authorized version,

* To any of my readers who wish to study critically the book of Isaiah, I strongly recommend Dr. Henderson's translation and commentary. I differ from him in regard to some renderings, as well as in prophetical interpretation; but it is a learned and elaborate work, full of interest to the Biblical student.

is so utterly unintelligible, that I greatly prefer the mode in which it is rendered by Dr. Henderson. "But darkness shall not remain, where once was distress; as formerly he rendered contemptible the land of Zebulon and the land of Napthali, so he shall afterwards confer honour upon them—the tract by the sea, the region beyond Jordan, Galilee of the nations." The verb here translated "rendered contemptible"—"lightly afflict," in the authorized version—is the same used in Deut. xxvii. 16: "Cursed is he that *setteth light by* [despiseth or contemneth], his father or his mother." And the verb, as translated above, "confer honour upon," and in the authorized version, "did more grievously afflict," is the one used in Jer. xxx. 19: "I will also *glorify* them." This rendering, which I believe the true one, connects the first verse of the ninth chapter with the second; while the authorized translation has no connection either with what precedes or follows it.

I think a careful study of this vision may be of great use to the student of prophecy, in aiding him to understand the arrangement and meaning of many subsequent prophecies.

The ninth chapter commences with the light shining on dark and despised Gallilee, through the birth of the Child, who was to be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father [or Father of the everlasting age], the Prince of Peace." The consequences of the birth of this Child were to be, that those who formerly walked in darkness should see a great light; that the yoke of Israel's burden, and the rod of his oppressor should be broken; on which account there should be universal rejoicing in the nation. It is further stated, that of the "increase and the peacefulness of his government there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever." After this general statement of the subject, the prophet is again led in vision to contemplate the more immediate calamities of Israel; these occupy him chiefly unto the end of the tenth chapter. With these nearer visitations, however, it is very evident that the exploits of some final adversary of Israel are intermingled; as there are several things stated of the "Assyrian" in this chapter that were

not true of Senacherib. Immediately after stating the overthrow of this Assyrian, the prophet returns to the glory of the latter days the peace and blessedness of Messiah's reign. In the eleventh chapter there are several direct and explicit statements made of what the Messiah was to perform. He is to stand as an ensign to the nations (v. 10 and 12,) and "stretch out his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people," to "assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." To explain this of the return from Babylon is too palpably absurd to deserve a serious refutation. Is restoring them from one given locality, gathering them together from the four corners of the earth? But into this subject I will enter more fully when we come to the prophecies of Jeremiah.

The vision concludes with the Israelites' song of triumph on their final deliverance, achieved by the Messiah, when God's anger is turned away from them, and He comforts them; when the Jewish nation, personified, as in other parts of this prophecy, as a female, is called upon to rejoice, "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitress

of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Isreal in the midst of thee." She has been "as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit," but now she is again established on her own holy mountain; and again cheered by that Divine presence, which, as Moses averred, distinguished her from all other people: "Great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of her." The termination of this vision is exactly the same as that of the previous vision in ch. iv. "The Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence."

Were it not that the system of making words say something quite different from their obvious meaning, falsely called spiritualising, is a solvent that can melt down the plainest truths, the latter part of this vision would be sufficient to convince any one that the prophets viewed the first and second advents of the Messiah as one great event, and therefore presented the features of these separate events interwoven together. That the "Child born" and the "Son given," refers to the Messiah's first

advent, no Christian disputes; but what the breaking of Israel's burden, and "the staff of his shoulder, and the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian, with burning and fuel of fire" has to do with the first coming of Christ in meekness and humility, it would puzzle the most inveterate spiritualiser to give any plausible account of. In like manner, in ch. xi. the Messiah is represented as a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots; on whom the sevenfold gift of the Spirit was to rest. This, again, is universally conceded to be true of His first coming. Something parallel to what is stated in the following verses may also be found in the actings of his first advent; He was of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; He did not judge after the sight of His eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of His ears. But during all His life upon earth, what was there analogous to the following statement: "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked?" And were the results of His first advent, that the wolf and the lamb should dwell together, that none should hurt nor

destroy in all God's holy mountain, and that the earth should be full of the knowledge of the Lord?

To go through all the visions of Isaiah, pointing out the work of the Messiah in each, would be to write a lengthened commentary on his prophecies, which is not my intention. I believe that what I have said will be a help to the student of prophecy, in directing his attention to the harmony of the Divine predictions. I think he may trace the order I have stated in most of the subsequent prophecies; not only in those of Isaiah, but in the visions of the other prophets. The two grand divisions of the great and terrible day of the Lord, and the glory of the latter days, may be distinctly perceived; and it frequently happens, as in the case of the vision we have been considering, that after mentioning these two subjects in the usual order, the prophet returns to the nearer visitations upon the Jews, with which he intermingles the more terrible features of "the great day." With these few hints to guide them, let my readers examine for themselves the visions contained in ch. xxiv—xxvi.; xxix.; xxxiii.—xxxv.; and in certain portions

of other chapters they will find the same events more briefly hinted at.

The 49th chapter of Isaiah is too remarkable to be passed over without a special notice. All attempts to apply it to Isaiah, or Cyrus, or the Jewish nation, or the prophets as a body, can be considered little better than mere evasions of the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah. That some, so-called Christian commentators, have adopted these evasions of the Rabbis, adds nothing to their force. What commission had Isaiah or Cyrus to enlighten the Gentiles? But the Jewish nation had this commission, say those who espouse this interpretation. Was the Jewish nation, then, the appointed instrument to bring itself again to God, to gather itself, and to raise itself up? and was it the Jewish nation that, after using its utmost endeavours to accomplish its own good, lamented that it had "laboured in vain, and spent its strength for nought?" Into such or similar absurdities, does every interpretation run, that attempts to apply the predictions of this chapter to any but the Messiah.

I can only afford space to notice one act of the Messiah stated in this chapter. "Thus

saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages." (Isa. xlix. 8.) The Messiah is not to burn up and destroy the earth, but to establish it; להקים, to raise it up, restore it from the effects of the fall. The commonly received notion of the entire destruction of the earth, and the removal of the righteous to dwell in some unknown region, derives no countenance from Scripture. The apparent confirmation from Peter's statement that "the earth and the works that are therein shall be burnt up," is explained and modified by the way in which he speaks of this earth previous to the flood; "The world that then was being overflowed with water, perished." This plainly intimates, that in speaking of the successive changes that take place on this earth, he does not contemplate its destruction in the mode in which this is generally understood; but that the "new earth" is related to the existing world in the same way as "the world that then was," is related to it. The Prophet Isaiah has else-

where borne the same testimony to the stability of the earth: "Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens: God Himself that formed the earth and made it; He hath established it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited; I am the Lord, and there is none else." (Isa. xlv. 18.) How can this be true, if God created it to be burnt up and destroyed? No; the renovating work of Messiah is not confined merely to the soul of man, but extends also to his body and his habitation.

Much has been written on the 53rd of Isaiah; yet it is impossible, in an inquiry like the present, to pass it over in silence. The reception of this chapter by the Jews, is a standing proof how much the *will* has to do with belief and unbelief. Infidelity is not, as infidels pretend, from want of evidence, but from not seeking evidence: nay, in many cases, from a determination not to seek it, and to resist it when forced upon them. This chapter has been brought forward to the Jews by their opponents for the last eighteen centuries, as a conclusive proof of the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah; and yet they possess to this day no authorized exposition of this

chapter! Many explanations of it have been given by Jewish authors; but none of them has been sufficiently satisfactory to the Jews at large, to deserve to be called the received opinion on the subject. Nothing can more clearly testify that this is the case than the expressive silence of one of their most sensible modern authors, David Levi, who gets over all difficulties by entirely omitting this chapter in his "Dissertations on the Prophecies of the Old Testament." He divides the book of Isaiah into fourteen distinct prophecies, and states that, "the ninth prophecy commences ch. li. v. 1., and is continued to the end of v. 12, of ch. lii." (Vol. i. p. 282); and that "the tenth prophecy commences ch. liv. 1., and is continued to the last verse of ch. lv. (Vol. ii. p. 1.) What then, I ask, is ch. lii. 13., to the end of ch. liii.? Is it not a portion of the book of Isaiah at all? No Jew will venture to assert this. Is it then no prophecy? This cannot be admitted, because it foretels future events as decidedly as any other portion of the prophet's writings. But it is clearly a prophecy which Mr. Levis think it wisest to let alone.

I cannot doubt that the utmost amount of

Jewish skill has been expended on this chapter; and the product of it amounts to—*nothing*. Ought not this to make a reflecting Jew pause and inquire, Why is it so? It is undeniable that the ancient Jewish commentators applied this passage to the Messiah; and it is evident that the most natural construction demands that it be applied to an individual. An individual has appeared who is asserted to be the one here spoken of. Is this some obscure person who has passed away, and left no trace on the world's history? No; it is One whose name and history are known wherever civilization is found; it is One who has "turned the world upside down." Has, then, the Individual in question cunningly adapted his actions to suit the predictions of this chapter? This might have been alleged had the prophecy contained a detail of actions to be performed; but it predicts, not what Jehovah's "servant" was to do, but what he was to suffer, what others were to do unto Him; the fulfilment of which is beyond the skill of the cleverest impostor. I earnestly and affectionately appeal to my Jewish brethren whether it is reasonable to set aside such claims without a full examina-

tion; whether it does not savour of a determination not to be convinced; nay, even of a fear, lest examination should necessarily end in conviction?

In this wonderful chapter, which is more like a history of Jesus of Nazareth, written after He had "poured out his soul unto death," than a prophecy uttered many centuries before His birth, we learn the atoning work of Messiah; that He was the true Lamb of the sin-offering, in whom all the types and shadows of the law had their fulfilment. This was His work of suffering and humiliation, that He might bring back fallen man to his allegiance to God, before He could establish His glorious kingdom in this revolted province of God's empire.

In the chapters that follow, the sin and oppression of Israel, with God's vengeance on their enemies, and the final glorious consummation, are dwelt upon alternately; the prophet, as his manner is, returning to narrate more fully the subject briefly noticed before. The work of Messiah is connected with these events by the declarations in lix. 20, lxi. 1—3, and lxiii. 1—6. The latter passage is an awful

description of His coming in judgment, when He is "revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God." (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.) These concluding chapters of Isaiah, compared with their parallelisms in the other prophets, and in the New Testament, might furnish matter for a volume. I can only afford space for a few of them.

The state of the Jewish people, described in ch. lix., though in many respects applicable to them at various periods of their history, appears to me to refer especially to their condition after that restoration to their own land which we are yet expecting. It harmonizes with the account given in Zech. xiii. 8, 9., xiv. 1, 2. In both passages this state of things is mentioned as immediately preceding the advent of the Deliverer. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him; and the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob." (lix. 19, 20.) Here is "the great and terrible day of the Lord" briefly hinted at; and then the "glory of the latter days" follows in magnificent detail. No attentive reader can fail to perceive the

close resemblance between the latter part of ch. lx. and Rev. xxi.

In ch. lxv. there is the same allusion to an evil condition of Israel in the latter days, to which I have already adverted. A certain portion of them are charged with apostacy and wickedness, and contrasted with another portion, denominated the Lord's "servants" and "elect." In v. 9. there is a remarkable allusion to the Messiah, as King of Israel, that is generally overlooked, and applied both by Christian and Jewish commentators to the nation of Israel at large. "And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains." Now the "seed out of Jacob" might be so construed; but the יורש הרי "*inheritor* of my mountains," is most distinctly in the singular. "זרע and יורש are collectives," says Henderson. This I deny as far as the latter is concerned. When the participle יורש is used collectively it is put in the plural form. I could adduce several instances; but the following is the most striking, because the singular and plural follow each other in successive verses. "Is there no *heir* to Israel?" (Jer. xlix. 1.) Here יורש is in the singular. In the following

verse, "Then shall Israel heir (or succeed to) them that were his heirs." *Heirs* here is in the plural, ירשיו. I believe the Heir or inheritor here spoken of to be no other than the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ; the true heir of David's throne; the true inheritor of Immanual's land. For, if Israel at large were meant as this heir, why say "out of Judah?" It is not Judah alone that is to be settled on the mountains of Israel in the latter days; for "thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will take the stick of Joseph which is in the hand of Ephraim and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick;—I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel." (Ezek. xxxvii. 19—22.)

I believe the threatenings contained, verses 11—15 of this lxv. chapter of Isaiah, are not addressed merely to the apostate Jews of the latter day, but to nominally Christian and infidel nations, who shall then be found confede-

rate with them "against the Lord and against His anointed;" when it is said to them, "Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; for God is with us." (Isa. viii. 9.) This great and terrible day is followed by the restitution of all things: "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind." (lxv. 17.) This was the promise that cheered and supported Peter. But many Christians in these times shrink from the idea of a new earth, as if it were a carnal notion. The following statement of a recent commentator embodies an opinion very generally received: "(Isa. lxv. 17, 18.) Creation is here to be understood not physically, but in a civil and religious sense. The subject is Jerusalem and the Jews. Their restoration will be like a fresh springing into existence; and the constitution to be established among them will be entirely different from their ancient economy."* But is not this explanation directly at variance with the inspired

* "Henderson's Commentary on Isaiah." (p. 441.)

commentary on the subject? Peter is not speaking of an ecclesiastical polity when he says, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up" (2 Pet. iii. 10); he is speaking of a great convulsion of nature, similar to that when "the earth, being overflowed with water, perished." In the view of such a convulsion, it would be strange indeed to urge the prospect of a new social, or religious constitution, as that which is to support men's minds during the dissolution of the elements of nature. If the new heavens and new earth of Isaiah be a social or ecclesiastical polity, then are those of Peter the same; and then, as a matter of consistency, not only must the heavens and earth destroyed by fire, be also a constitution or polity, but the perishing of the old world by water must also mean the overthrow of some civil or religious system. If one part be figurative, so must the whole. But we know that the flood was a real and not a figurative inundation; and, therefore, we

believe that the "new earth" of Isaiah and Peter, is a real and not a figurative earth. It is to be a new earth, not in the sense of a substance newly called into being, but of a substance *renovated*—formed anew.

After dwelling on the glory and blessedness of the renovated earth in general, and Jerusalem in particular, the prophet again glances at the evil state which precedes this glory; and his language corroborates, in some measure, the views of those who consider that there will be a remnant of believing Jews in Jerusalem in the latter days, who will be the special objects of Anti-christ's wrath, and of the persecution of their unbelieving brethren. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at His word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but He shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed." (Isa. lxvi. 5.) If Gentile believers were here addressed, it is not natural to suppose that unbelieving Jews would be called their brethren. Another notion long entertained by students of prophecy is also strongly confirmed in this chapter; that the restoration of the Jews to

their own land, previous to the second advent of Christ and final consummation, though it may include a considerable number of the nation, will yet be but partial; as it is here distinctly stated, that *after* the wonderful display of the Lord's glory, when He "will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind," (v. 15.) a great number of Jews are to be brought out of different countries to the holy mountain Jerusalem, for an offering to the Lord.

Wonderful time, when "Jerusalem shall be a rejoicing, and her people a joy!" Alas! they have hitherto been a joy to none; they departed from the Lord, and rebelled against Him, until He was obliged, for the honour of His name, and the vindication of His character, to "make their plagues wonderful," so that the nations hissed at them, and made them a reproach and a bye-word. But God hath promised that they shall be a joy; and has linked the blessedness of the whole earth with the blessedness of His chosen people. "Rejoice, O ye nations with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be mer-

ciful unto his land, and to his people." (Deut. xxxii. 43.) "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all nations shall be gathered into it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart." (Jer. iii. 17.) Was this fulfilled at the return from the Babylonish captivity; and is it the present position and condition of the nations?

I earnestly entreat my readers to do what I have neither time nor space to do for them; diligently to study those passages to which I have directed their attention, and to compare them with those parallel passages to which the marginal references and their own recollections will direct them. I feel sure they will be convinced that the work of Messiah was not only to redeem the souls and bodies of His people, but "to establish the earth," to "make all things new," to reign as king over a renovated world; to restore the outcasts of Israel; to gather the dispersed of Judah; to make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, and her people a joy.

We have next to consider the testimony of

Jeremiah in regard to the advent and work of Messiah. There is an interesting peculiarity about this prophet, which is worthy of notice. He not only prophesied of Israel's approaching woe and degradation, and their ultimate deliverance by the Messiah, but he was brought deeply into the experience of the sufferings of Israel, and of the Messiah. Like the royal prophet David, he found the way into the valley of vision lay through that of humiliation and trial. He was indeed "the man who had seen affliction;" but he was also permitted to see a glorious termination to all the sorrows of his beloved people, in the days when "Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely."

The Lord Almighty, who had known him, and destined him for a great work, even before his birth, was pleased to permit him to spend his early years in quiet and retirement, probably at his native town of Anathoth. Even after the delivery of his first prophecy it would appear he had not attracted great notice; since, five years afterwards, in the eighteenth year of Josiah, when this king wished to inquire of the Lord, he sent Hilkiah, and the others, not to Jeremiah, but to Huldah the prophetess.

(2 Kings xxii. 13, 14.) I do not conceive that this was simply because she dwelt in Jerusalem; because Anathoth not being more than about four or five English miles from Jerusalem, the distance could be no bar in the way of sending to Jeremiah, had he been the prophet at whose mouth the mind of the Lord was usually learnt. I am rather disposed to believe that, as the strongest trees are of the slowest growth, so he who was to be set "over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant;" he who was to be "a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land" (Jer. i. 10, 18), was kept in retirement from the busy scenes of the capital; that by meditation and communion with God, he might gain the strength that was needful for the arduous duties to which, in after life, he was to be called. Those young and fiery spirits, who think they cannot be useful in the Lord's cause, unless they press forward at once to occupy some prominent and

important station, may learn from this, that the more the instrument is prepared and fitted for its work, the better able will it be for the highest and noblest service. How many a one, in riper years, has mourned the loss of that leisure and retirement, which, in his youth, he foolishly despised, and rashly abandoned!

But though Jeremiah does not appear to have been much known to Josiah in the eighteenth year of his reign, it is natural to suppose that, in the course of the thirteen years that succeeded, the youthful prophet assisted the youthful reformer with his counsel and sympathy. True, the prophet knew these reforms were but temporary; "the seer's sad spirit" doubtless showed him that "notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah;" and that He was determined to "remove Judah also out of His sight as He had removed Israel" (2 Kings xxiii. 26, 27); yet thirteen years of peace and comparative righteousness are not to be despised by the people of God. "The long-suffering of God is salvation" to individual sinners of the human race. I do not think it

at all a legitimate conclusion, that because we look for the entire breaking up of the present frame-work of society, and expect no permanent amelioration of any evil until the Lord shall take unto Himself His great power and reign, that we are therefore to despise all partial amelioration, and withdraw from all participation in schemes for the spiritual or temporal benefit of our fellow-men. Most precious is every season when the winds of persecution are hushed, when pressing want is unknown; then is the time to be diligent in bringing the power of the everlasting gospel to bear on the consciences of sinners, trusting that the Holy Spirit will then seal many of the servants of God in their foreheads. When the churches have rest, they should be both edified and multiplied. (Acts ix. 31.) I believe much unnecessary prejudice is excited against scriptural views of the coming kingdom, by the attitude of isolation assumed by many who entertain them. They are apt to look with indifference, at least, if not with contempt, on the efforts for the spiritual benefit of others, that are made by those who believe that the world is to be converted through

missionary exertions, and new-modelled through improved political institutions. Let us carefully avoid separating ourselves from any portion of Christ's body. Let us cleave to the good, and refuse the evil; assisting to the utmost of our power in spreading the knowledge of God in the earth, though we know that in this dispensation its effects are not universal, but partial; let us assist in "undoing the heavy burdens," in adding to the external comforts of our poorer brethren of mankind at the present time, although we expect, ere long, all things around us will be shaken and overturned. The mistakes of good men, or the godless infidelity of evil men, do not alter the eternal distinctions between right and wrong; good remains good, and evil remains evil, whoever be the agents by whom either is accomplished. But while we reject no man's good, let it be distinctly seen that we connive at no man's evil. Let us not put "bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter."

From the various visions of Jeremiah I can only select a few. His prophecies are arranged without any regard to chronological order; some of those that were delivered in

the reign of Zedekiah, being placed before others that were given in the reign of his predecessor Jehoiakim. (See chaps. xxiii. xxiv. xxv.) I shall first shortly notice one of the earliest, because it contains one of the many proofs that the restoration of the Jews, spoken of by Jeremiah and the other prophets, in connection with the glory and happiness of Israel, was not the restoration from Babylon. In this vision (chap. iii. 6—25), after a touching appeal to the backsliding Israelites, the Lord promises to take them one of a city, and two of a family, and bring them unto Zion, to give them pastors after His own heart, who will feed them with knowledge and understanding, and then declares, "At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem; neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart." (v. 17.) They know little, indeed, of the history of the Jews after their return from Babylon, who can suppose any of the features of the above description to belong to that period. They had not then pastors according to God's heart;

all nations were not then gathered to the name of the Lord at Jerusalem; and, certainly, the greatest stickler for the return from Babylon being the fulfilment of the glorious predictions concerning the restoration of the Jews, will hardly venture to maintain that since that time they have no more walked "after the imagination of their evil heart."

It is remarkable what a prominent feature "pastors after God's own heart" is in the description of restored Israel. Ch. xxiii. begins by denouncing a woe on the pastors who had destroyed and scattered the sheep of His pasture; those kingly and priestly guides whom the Lord reproaches by Ezekiel as "the shepherds of Israel who do feed themselves, and feed not the flock" (Ezek. xxxiv. 2, 3); and it then proceeds at once to Israel's final issue out of all these troubles. "I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord."

(Jer. xxiii. 3, 4.) The prophecy then proceeds to declare how this happy state is to be brought about, even by the Deliverer, the Messiah. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice on the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." (v. 5, 6.) Here, as in many of the other prophecies, the work of Messiah is connected with the restoration and prosperity of the Jewish people. And how have such express declarations been generally treated by Christian commentators? We may take Dr. Adam Clarke as expressing the ordinarily received views on the subject. "The real *Jew* is not one who has his circumcision in the flesh, but in the spirit. The real *Israel* are true believers in Christ Jesus; and the genuine Jerusalem is the church of the firstborn, and made free, with all her children, from the bondage of Satan, death, and hell. All these exist only in the days of the Messiah. All that went before were the types or significations

of these glorious Gospel excellencies."* Does the worthy commentator mean to say that Abraham, and David, and Daniel, were not delivered from the bondage of Satan and hell? As to the bondage of death, it is one from which the saints are not yet delivered, nor shall be until the resurrection. The prophet pursues the theme of Israel's restoration through chapters xxxi.—xxxiii.; chapters that ought to be attentively and prayerfully perused by all who feel any doubt on the subject of the restoration of the Jews. I cannot follow this subject out at present, but only notice it in connection with the Messiah. After mentioning that the Jews shall be in great trouble previous to their final deliverance (declarations to the same effect being afterwards more minutely given by Zechariah, in chap. xiv.), the Lord states by the prophet (Jer. xxx. 9), "They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them." The same promise is repeated in Ezek. xxxiv. 23, "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even

* Adam Clarke's Commentary, in loco.

my servant David." And again, in Ezekiel xxxvii., when the prophet has, by the symbolical action of the two sticks becoming one in his hand, prefigured the future reunion of the severed kingdoms of Israel and Judah, it is said, "I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land, upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; David my servant shall be king over them; and they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and my servant David shall be their prince for ever." (Ezek. xxxvii. 22—25.) And Hosea, after predicting that the children of Israel should "abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice," says, "Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king." (Hosea iii. 4, 5.) That the ancient Jews referred these passages to Messiah, is beyond question. The Chaldee paraphrase on Jer. xxx. 9, says, "They shall obey למשיחה בר דוד, Messiah, the son

of David." Messiah, the Redeemer of the world, is also, in an especial sense, king of the Jews. "The government shall be upon his shoulder." "The Lord shall give him the throne of his father David." Well might the wise men inquire, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews?" He that is to sit "upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even for ever." (Isaiah ix. 7.) The king who shall "reign in righteousness" will first exhibit the fruits of His righteous dominion in the Jewish nation; and the blessed order and harmony there displayed will diffuse itself over all other kingdoms. It is difficult to say which of the two absurdities is the greater; to treat all those distinct intimations of a certain civil and social condition upon earth, as symbolical expressions for a spiritual change on the hearts of men; or, in order to avoid this absurdity, to maintain, in the face of all history, that these things were fulfilled at the return from Babylon. "Behold, I will gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them." Is Babylon "all countries?" "And I will

bring them again into this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely. And they shall be my people, and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul." (Jer. xxxii. 37—41). Have the Jews received at the restoration from Babylon, "one heart and one way," that they might fear the Lord for ever? Has the Lord never since then turned from doing them good? Has He so put His fear in their hearts as has prevented them from turning away from Him? It is almost blasphemy to maintain that God could thus deceive His chosen people; that He could promise them blessings so large in extent, and so glorious in kind, as these, concerning a temporary restoration that was to terminate in a fiercer deluge of wrath, and

issue in a far longer and more terrible captivity than any they had previously undergone. Truly, God's ways are not so unequal. In the close of this vision one would almost imagine He alludes to these mistaken views in regard to His purposes concerning Israel, that are unhappily so common in the present day: "Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying: The two families which the Lord hath chosen He hath even cast them off; thus they have despised my people that they should be no more a nation before them." Now is not this what is currently said at the present day, that the Jews exist no longor as a nation;—that their national polity ceased for ever at the dispersion? If the Lord counted it strange that men should think He had cast off His chosen people then, is it not equally strange in the present day? Is there any possible form of words by which the fact of Israel's continuance as a nation could be more unequivocally stated than the following?—"Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon, and of the stars, for a light by night; which divideth the sea when the waters thereof roar; the Lord

of Hosts is His name: if those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever." (Jer. xxxi. 35. 36.)

It may be right to notice a passage in this chapter, the application of which, by the Evangelist Matthew, has appeared difficult and obscure to many readers. "Thus saith the Lord: A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord: Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border." (Jer. xxxi. 15—17.) This is applied by Matthew to the massacre of the infants at Bethlehem by Herod; and many readers find it difficult to understand how this murder of the children can be a fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremiah. I think the difficulty will be found to vanish when the prophecy is considered in its full extent. Rachel, it will be

remembered, died at Ephrath in giving birth to Benjamin, whom she called, Benoni, the son of my sorrow. Her tomb remains to this day, situated between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Rachel is therefore poetically represented as dwelling there, looking with deep interest on the fate of the Jewish nation, that is, of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, of the latter of which, she was the mother. God had been promising, through Jeremiah, great blessings to the house of Jacob; their restoration to their land, and the peace and prosperity they should there enjoy. Rachel is represented as weeping at the captivity and dispersion of her children, and she is told that there is hope laid up in store for her. At length, in the fulness of time, the Messiah, the great Deliverer is born in Bethlehem. Are the immediate consequences of His birth, peace and blessedness to the Jewish nation? No; Rachel is again represented as viewing the massacre at Bethlehem as a first instalment of the misery and oppression of her afflicted children; she sees them about to be driven out from the land once more, and will not be comforted because they are not. In this weeping case is Rachel still; but there is

hope in the end, that her children shall come again into their own border. This is a portion of the mystery that meets us at every turning; the non-fulfilment by the Messiah, of that which the prophets declared He was to accomplish. He was to be "the Prince of peace;" and yet Christ "came not to send peace on earth, but a sword." Into this subject I have entered fully in the previous treatise. The answer to the unbelieving Jew and the infidel, who both tell us that Jesus Christ did not fulfil what the prophets predicted of the Messiah, is the same that was given to comfort Rachel: "Then is hope in the end." The children of Israel shall come again to their own border; and shall enjoy all the blessedness promised through the various prophets.

Before leaving the book of Jeremiah I must shortly notice a very striking vision in the 25th chapter, which relates to the great and terrible day of the Lord. In the 15th verse the Lord gives the prophet a wine cup of wrath to make all the nations drink of it. The prophet takes it, and begins first at Jerusalem; and proceeding through various kingdoms enumerated in verses 20—25, at length states, verse 26.—

"And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world which are upon the face of the earth; and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel; drink ye, and be drunken, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you." This passage corresponds very much with the passages in Matt. xxiv., Luke xxi. &c.—"Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." The "king of Sheshach," or Babylon, (see chap. li. 41.) who is to drink of this cup last, corresponds with the eighth head of mystic Babylon, the last great opponent of God's church and people. The verses that follow are very remarkable.—"And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thine hand to drink, then shalt thou say unto them, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, ye shall certainly drink. For lo I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished; for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth." Mr. Cunningham, of Lainshaw, more than

twenty years since, remarked in one of his works on prophecy, that the anxiety to preserve the peace of Europe, that has obtained among the leading powers since the close of the last European war, is quite a new feature in history. After having drank for many years of the bitter cup of war, they refuse to drink it again. This, in itself, doubtless, is right. But, alas! though the nations of Europe seek to escape war, they seek not to establish righteousness and justice in the earth. In all of them the spread of the Gospel of truth is in some way opposed and thwarted. In all of them there is much that must be shaken and removed, before the kingdoms of this world can become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ. Therefore, it is said to them, when they strive to push the cup of war from them, "Ye shall certainly drink." The verses that succeed those above quoted contain the usual features of "the great and terrible day of the Lord." "The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; He shall mightily roar upon His habitation; He shall give a shout as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth.

A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations; He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, behold evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth, even unto the other end of the earth; they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried: they shall be dung upon the ground."—(v. 30—33.) The prophet Ezekiel finishes this awful picture by inviting every feathered fowl, and every beast of the field, to come to this great sacrifice, that they "may eat flesh and drink blood;" (Ezek. xxxix. 17—20.) which words are repeated in Rev. xix. 17, 18: "I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried with a loud voice unto all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men."

Such is the fearful night that precedes the glorious millenial day! O, that the people of

God would give heed to these warnings of coming judgment, that they may be stirred up to greater diligence in spreading the knowledge of Christ in this the day of grace: "The night cometh in which no man can work!"

The restoration of the Jews, and their re-establishment in their own land, is closely interwoven with all the prophecies; but this is so especially the case with the prophecies of Ezekiel, that it is impossible to avoid making this the prominent subject in commenting on the book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel began to prophesy a few years before Jeremiah ceased to exercise the prophetic office. Like him, he was a priest as well as a prophet. But while Jeremiah prophesied amid the stirring and exciting scenes that preceded and accompanied the invasion of the land of Israel, and siege of Jerusalem, Ezekiel delivered his prophecies amid the mournful stillness of the captive colony, which had been established by Nebuchadnezzar "by the River of Chebar." He was one of those who wept by the rivers of Babylon. The early portion of his prophecy is occupied with denunciations against the wickedness of Jerusalem, and decla-

rations of her speedy downfal; occasionally interspersed with those intimations of her future prosperity that are more largely dwelt upon in the latter portion of the book.

On a cursory view of the prophecies relating to the restoration of the Jews to their own land, their conversion to the faith of Christ appears a contemporaneous event; but a more careful examination clearly shows, that there must be at least a partial restoration of the Jews in their unconverted state. The first hint we get of this is in Ps. cvii., which contains a history of God's dealings with Israel; brief, indeed, but sufficiently distinct when compared with other Scriptures. In verses 34, 35, the Psalmist states that God "turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein." This has been accomplished, and is an exact description of the present condition of Palestine. In the following verse he predicts what has not yet occurred. "He turneth the wilderness into standing water and dry ground into watersprings. And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city

for habitation; and sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly, and suffereth not their cattle to decrease." After this account of Israel's prosperity, the following remarkable hint of a reverse is given. "Again they are minished and brought low, through oppression, affliction, and sorrow." The cause of this "bringing low" we learn in the thirty-eight chapter of Ezekiel; in which we find the restored Israelites mentioned in terms precisely similar to those we have just cited. They are represented as dwelling in Palestine in some such agricultural colonies as modern philanthropists have recently planned for them. Of the enemy who disturbs them, I shall speak more particularly hereafter. The prophet is desired to prophesy against "Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal," and to say unto him: "In the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people, against the mountains of Israel which have been always waste; but it is brought forth out of the nations and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou

shalt ascend and come like a storm; thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee. Thus saith the Lord God, it shall also come to pass, that at the same time shall things come into thy mind, and thou shalt think an evil thought; and thou shalt say: I will go up to the land of unwalled villages; I will go to them that are at rest, that dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates, to take a spoil, and to take a prey, to turn thine hand upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations, which have gotten cattle and goods, that dwell in the midst of the land. In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army. And thou shalt come up against my people Israel as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their

eyes." (Ezek. xxxviii. 8—16.) While the agricultural population, dwelling in their unwalled villages, are thus attacked, the city of Jerusalem does not escape. For this I shall refer to Zechariah. "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled." The enemy, however, has but a short triumph. "Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle." (Zech. xiv. 1—3.) This final attack on Israel, and the direct interposition of God on their behalf, is spoken of in various other parts of Scripture. In another chapter of this same prophecy of Zechariah, it is said: "Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people. In that day will I make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire among the wood, and like a torch of fire in a sheaf; and they shall devour all the people round about

on the right hand and on the left. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them shall be as David, &c." (Zech. xii, 2—8.) The same final combat and deliverance are alluded to by Isaiah: "Like as the lion and the young lion roaring on his prey, so shall the Lord of hosts come down to fight for Mount Zion, and for the hill thereof; as birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem, defending also he will deliver it." (Isa. xxxi. 4, 5.) I presume no one will venture to maintain that any of these passages can refer to either of the previous sieges of Jerusalem; since neither in the time of Nebuchadnezzar nor of Titus, did the Lord defend and deliver Jerusalem; but, on the contrary, gave her up into the hand of her enemies. All these predictions, therefore, refer to events yet future; refer to a time when the Jews shall be again inhabiting their own land, though not yet in the state of happiness and confirmed prosperity that forms such a marked feature in "the glory of the latter days."

In drawing these inquiries respecting the work of the Messiah to a close, I shall no longer follow the order of the books of Scrip-

ture, but pursue certain topics separately, and then show their bearings on the whole scheme of redemption. I think the passages above cited sufficiently prove that there is to be at least a partial restoration of the Jews, in a considerable number, to their own land, previous to their conversion and final establishment in peace and glory. If farther proof be wanting, it can be abundantly supplied. I shall now examine those passages that relate to the last enemy of Israel, who is destined to fall "upon the mountains of Israel;" and who, it will readily be admitted, would not go up to Palestine to fight against Jews that were still scattered and dispersed amongst the nations.

It has often been made a reproach to the students of prophecy, that they press into their service events very inadequate to fulfil the predictions of which they would make them the accomplishment. I do not deny that many mistakes of this kind have been made; and that the various fulfilments of the same prediction, adopted by different expositors, have thrown an air of uncertainty over the whole subject. But though I readily admit that more caution should have been exercised

before such events as the Reformation, the French Revolution, and other such marked epochs, were adopted as being the very event predicted by a certain prophet, yet I must remind those who make such mistakes a reason for doubting the possibility of ever coming to a clear understanding of the prophetic Scriptures, that in many cases the error was only one of *time;* and that it is probable the event really intended by the prophet, may be one very similar to that which the expositors erroneously considered the event prophesied of. All the vicissitudes that occur in human society consist of events that have often occurred before, merely modified by attendant circumstances. The great features in any given war, famine, pestilence, and revolution, are identical with those in all wars, famines, pestilences, and revolutions; it is therefore not to be wondered at, that plausible fulfilments should be found to suit the theories of each expositor of prophecy; and one, or all of them, fixing upon a wrong event, has no tendency whatever to impede the discovery of the right one by some subsequent expositor.

I have always considered it a great error to

expect in the prophetic Scriptures, that minute chronological detail, that consecutive history of the world, which some expositors imagine they find in it. Some commentators on the Apocalypse, for example, discover therein a complete history of Europe from the Christian era to the millenium. But this is altogether contrary to the method of prophecy. The vision of the seer was not a panoramic view of successive events, but the picture of a great crisis. The first objects that attracted the prophet's notice were generally some judgments impending over Israel; but as his gaze continued fixed on the vision, he saw the more awful features of "the great and terrible day of the Lord;" and then, in the sunny distance beyond, he beheld the glory of Israel and of the whole earth, when the trees of the wood rejoice, because the Lord cometh to judge the world in righteousness. (Psa. xcvi. 12, 13.) So far were the prophets from dealing in details of detached events, that they group together as one, events that are separated by centuries; because these events are part of the great scheme of the world's redemption. They do not divide the Messiah's coming to "make

His soul an offering for sin," from the period when He is to "divide the spoil with the strong;" (Isa. liii. 10, 12) nor the time when he appeared as the feeble "sprout from the stem of Jesse," from that in which "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall he slay the wicked." (Isa. xi. 1, 4.) The grand, final crisis, when every thing that exalteth and opposeth itself against the will of God, and the establishment of Christ's righteous kingdom upon earth, is to be put down, is the period ever present to the prophetic mind; and it is reiterated from time to time, to comfort the people of God, amid all their trials, with the sure and certain hope of a kingdom that cannot be moved; and to warn the wicked that, if they remain impenitent and reject the offered mercy of God in Christ, they will be shut out from this glorious kingdom.

To those who desire to study the sure word of prophecy, I would strongly recommend an intimate acquaintance with the letter of Scripture. When frequent perusal has fixed the words of the various predictions in the memory, it is wonderful how much light is thrown on

any given subject that may be under consideration, by the spontaneous suggestion to the mind, of similar statements in other portions of the prophetic writings. It is not until we have this intimate knowledge of the revealed word, that we are in a condition efficiently to compare scripture with scripture,—"spiritual things with spiritual." What formerly appeared detached and general denunciations against evil, or threatenings of judgment, then assume a specific character; and irresistibly impress the mind that they refer to one and the same crisis; while brief hints, that had not formerly attracted notice, are found exactly to correspond with more lengthened details in some other prediction: and thus link the whole passage in which they occur, to the events contained in this prediction.

I now proceed to consider what is revealed concerning the last great enemy of God and His people, who, by the common consent of prophetic students, is generally denominated Antichrist. There are some divines and commentators who strongly reprobate the notion of a personal Antichrist; who consider the term either as denoting an evil principle, or

the enemies of truth in general, or a succession of individual opponents of the cause of God. Those who think the notion of a personal Antichrist absurd, and who seem to consider it beneath the dignity of Divine revelation to be so much occupied with one individual man, forget that in all the great movements that have ever occurred among mankind, some one man has been the chief actor, the mainspring of the whole. Whether for good or for evil, it is individual minds that have ruled the world; and when events have been brought about by design at all, it has been the design of one man, though it may have required thousands to execute it. It is therefore not inconsistent with God's providential dealings in the affairs of the world, but strictly conformable thereto, that there should be some prominent individual at the head of the last great confederacy "against the Lord and against His anointed." I am convinced that no attentive reader of the prophetic Scriptures can come to any other conclusion. From first to last they meet with one individual whose identity is not to be mistaken; and who cannot be recognized in any enemy of the truth who has yet ap-

peared on the stage of the world. That many have borne a strong resemblance to him, cannot be denied; one conqueror must necessarily resemble another conqueror in many respects; and all wicked men have many things in common; but neither Antiochus Epiphanes, Buonaparte, no individual pope, nor the pope as an abstract idea, has fulfilled all that is predicated of this last enemy. I will go so far as to admit that the resemblance in some of these instances may have gone beyond a mere coincidence; that some of these enemies may have been types of that "wicked one whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming;" but none of them has been this "wicked one" himself.

My space will only admit of citing a few of the passages where this individual is spoken of; I must therefore beg my readers carefully to peruse the whole of those portions of Scripture of which I give extracts.

One of the earliest notices of this personage, is in Psalm ix. After stating that the Lord has rebuked the heathen, and destroyed the wicked, it is said in v. 6:—"O thou enemy!

destructions are come to a perpetual end; and thou hast destroyed cities, their memorial is perished with them." This is one of the minute hints to which I have referred, that are afterwards more largely explained. In many of the subsequent psalms, when David is speaking of his own personal enemies, he is led beyond them to this last enemy. A similar transition takes place in the prophecies of Isaiah, where, in prophesying, respecting the enemy of Israel at the time being, the prophet is carried beyond him to the final enemy. This is very evident in regard to "the Assyrian" mentioned in chapters x. xiv. The passage relating to the king of Babylon, at the commencement of chapter xiv. is so striking, and so well illustrates what I have stated, that I must dwell upon it for a little.

When Hezekiah had recovered from his illness, the son of the king of Babylon "sent letters and a present" to him, congratulating him on his recovery. Hezekiah showed the messengers from Babylon "all his precious things," his silver, his gold, "and all the house of his armour;" in order, probably, to impress the minds of the strangers with his invincible

power. But God will not suffer His own children to boast in an arm of flesh. The prophet Isaiah is sent to reprove him for his vain-glory, and to tell him the purpose of the Lord:—"Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left, saith the Lord." (Isaiah xxxix. 1—6.) It was probably when the prophet was musing on this sad prediction, that the Spirit carried him in vision to behold the overthrow of Babylon; and comforted him with a view of Israel's final prosperity, and triumph over all his enemies. The vision contained in Isaiah xiii. begins with the judgment on Babylon, but soon gets beyond it to the final consummation. "Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger:—And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." (v. 9, 11.) This destruction of Babylon is followed by the happy restoration of Israel; and then follows the passage to which I wish to draw the reader's

attention:—"It shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve, that thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: How hath the oppressor ceased, the golden city ceased! The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest and is quiet; they break forth into singing." The person here spoken of under the title of "king of Babylon," is evidently no ordinary conqueror; since his fall is mentioned as an object of interest and curiosity to all the great men who have preceded him. "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming; it stirred up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations: All they shall speak and say unto thee: Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of

thy viols; the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart: I will ascend into Heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High. Yet, thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying:—Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms? That made the world a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?" (Isa. xiv. 3—17.) I do not deny that several features in this picture recall the pretensions of the popedom; while other particulars resemble the exploits of Buonaparte; but neither this renowned conqueror, nor any pope, has been the counterpart of the character here delineated. Buonaparte, so far from being an enemy of Israel, was very kind to the Jews. There is,

in the description of Israel's last foe, a union of the spiritual and military offices, that has never yet been exhibited in one man. The Pope, it is true, has made wars in defence of his ecclesiastical rights, but he has never assumed a military character in his own person.

Whoever the king of Tyre may have been, who was the immediate subject of Ezekiel's prophecy in ch. xxviii., it is difficult to resist the conviction, that the last great enemy is the person intended in the latter part of it; the particulars stated being too remarkable to apply to any historical personage who has passed away and been forgotten. Like the king of Babylon above-mentioned, he sits "upon the holy mountain of God," and like him, he is "brought down to the pit." I do not enter into a particular examination of this prophecy, because it is attended with considerable difficulty, and contains statements which probably the event only will elucidate. I allude especially to verses 12—15, which I commend to the attention of the advanced student.

I pass on to a prophecy in which it is distinctly stated that this last enemy is meant. I

have already spoken of the condition of Israel as narrated in Ezek. xxxviii. xxxix; I shall now speak of the adversary who is there designated "Gog, the chief prince of Meshach and Tubal."* He, as we have seen, "ascends, and comes like a storm" upon the Israelites, while dwelling securely in "unwalled villages." This expedition of his "to take a spoil and to take a prey," to turn his hand "upon the desolate places that are now inhabited, and upon the people that are gathered out of the nations," has a design and a termination very different from what he expects. In the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, this expedition is designed, that the heathen may know the Lord, when He is sanctified in Gog before their eyes. (Ezek. xxxviii. 16.) After this statement, there follows the remarkable declaration, that this individual has been the subject of all previous prophecies relating to Israel in the latter days; thereby, one should think, settling the question as to whether Antichrist is a person or not. "Thus saith the Lord God, art thou he of whom I have spoken

* Some read "prince of Rosh, Meshach, and Tubal, and conceive ראש *Rosh*, to mean the Russian empire."

in old time by my servants, the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years, that I would bring thee against them?" (v. 1 .) This invasion is the signal for that direct interposition of God for Israel's deliverance, that is so frequently alluded to. "And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face; and I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord God." This extremity of Israel, which is to call forth a special manifestation of Jehovah's power, was indeed "spoken of in old time," for it was revealed unto Moses, and announced in the song he taught the children of Israel shortly before his death. After mentioning the rejection of Israel,—"they have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God, and I will move them to jealousy with those who are not a people,"—the song goes on to narrate Israel's oppression by the Gentiles, and then declares the overthrow of these oppressors; "Their foot shall slide in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make

haste. For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone; and there is none shut up or left." This last act of vengeance on the enemies of God and of Israel, is then announced with the awful sanction of an oath: "I lift up my hand to heaven and say: I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance on mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh: and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people." (Deut. xxxii. 21—43.) This is no mere general declaration that God will take vengeance on those that oppose him; it relates to a specific period, when there is to be such a deliverance of Israel, that all nations shall be called upon to rejoice with God's chosen people.

In Exek. xxxix. 4, it is said to this last great

enemy: "Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands, and the people that is with thee." This is directly stated in several other parts of Scripture. It is said of the "king of Assyria," that "the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel;" (Isa. viii. 8.) then, and there, to be broken: "I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot." (Isa. xiv. 25.) And of the wilful king of Daniel it is stated, that "he shall plant the tabernacles of his palaces between the seas ('the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea,') in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him." (Dan. xi. 45.) All these events are coupled with the deliverance of Israel. In exact accordance with this is the remarkable prophecy of Joel, in which the last great struggle of the nations against the Lord and His people is stated to take place in the valley of Jehosaphat. This valley, as our readers are aware, is close to Jerusalem, lying between the city and the Mount of Olives.

The writings of the minor prophets are very little studied by Christians, except by

those who have devoted themselves to the study of prophecy. At this I am not surprised. Without the key which the right understanding of the greater prophets affords, the writings of the minor prophets are unintelligible, and therefore comparatively uninteresting. Most of them are denunciations of judgment, and, like the greater prophets, they often pass, by very abrupt transitions, from the impending judgment to the final day of terror; and like them, are led, by the contemplation of some nearer deliverance to that last great deliverance of Israel, when "Saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau, and the kingdom shall be the Lord's." (Obadiah 21.)

The prophecy of Joel deserves the diligent study of the prophetical student. In it he will find the last great conflict predominating over the nearer visitations of "the locust and the palmer-worm;" until at length these are quite lost sight of, and the awful events of "the great and terrible day of the Lord" are detailed in the usual manner. In the second chapter, the enemy is spoken of as an individual, in terms precisely similar to those used in speaking of

Gog and the wilful king. After exhorting the Jews to turn to the Lord with all their heart, to fast, and humble themselves before Him, it is said: "Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people;—and I will remove far off from you the northern one; (Gog is to come from his 'place out of the north parts;' Ezek. xxxviii. 15.) and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face towards the east sea, and his hinder part towards the utmost sea; ('between the seas, where the encampment of the wilful king is to be;') and his stink shall come up, and his ill-savour shall come up, (Ezek. xxxix. 11.) because he hath done great things." (Joel ii. 18, 20.)

Connected with the expedition of the last enemy, there is a circumstance mentioned, that to some persons may appear a comparatively slight and trivial coincidence, but will not be without its weight to those who know the value of minutely comparing "scripture with scripture." Amongst the "great army" that is to come up with Gog, "Ethiopia and Lybia" are specially mentioned. (Ezek. xxxviii. 5.) And of the wilful king of Daniel it is said: "The

Lybians and the Ethiopians shall be at his steps." (Dan. xi. 43.) In a former vision of Ezekiel, the same conjunction is spoken of in connection with the day of the Lord: "Thus saith the Lord God: howl ye, woe worth the day! For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near: a cloudy day: it shall be the time of the heathen: and the sword shall come upon Egypt, and great pain shall be in Ethiopia, when the slain shall fall in Egypt, and they shall take away her multitude, and her foundations shall be broken down. Ethiopia, and Lybia, and Lydia, and all the mingled people, and Chub, and the men of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword." (Ezek. xxx. 2—5.)

I do not expect my readers to form anything like a distinct idea of this important prophetic personage, from these brief notices and scanty quotations; I must entreat them to peruse the whole of the passages from which I have made short extracts. I feel convinced that they cannot do so without coming to the conviction, that the person spoken of under the various names of the Assyrian, the king of Babylon, the king who shall do according to

his own will, &c., are one and the same person. Those who imagine that the world is to be Christianised by a gradual process, carry their notions of regular progression with them to the study of every portion of the prophetic Scriptures. They must find out, in a prophecy of Daniel, for example, something analagous to every historical event that has happened from the time the vision commences unto its termination. This notion, I conceive, throws obscurity alike into the historical and prophetical parts of Scripture. So much of the history of the world was given, as bore upon the destiny of the Jews; so much of prophetic history is given, as bears upon that great crisis, the accomplishment of Messiah's work, when "all kings shall fall down before him, and all nations shall serve him." (Psa. lxxii. 11.) When this view is adopted, the scanty details, the abrupt transitions, and other difficulties that attend the style of the sacred writers, vanish at once. The holy prophets keenly felt the wickedness prevailing around them; and the Lord comforted them with a view, not of Israel's deliverance and blessedness only, but of the renovation of the whole

earth, the glory of the latter days. And this time of glory is, in their visions, invariably preceded by a "time of trouble." When this is duly considered, the objections to the notion of a personal Anti-christ have but little foundation; since, if there is to be a grand crisis, "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time," (Dan. xii. 1.) all historical analogy would lead us to expect that some prominent individual would be connected with such a crisis.

I would strongly deprecate the hazarding of premature conjectures respecting this Anti-christ. Previous to the death of Buonaparte, some students of prophecy were confident he was the individual meant; a recent writer is so bent upon this idea, that he will have him raised from the dead in order to complete his work. Others supposed it was the son of Napoleon, until his death also settled the question. These hasty guesses have no effect but that of pouring contempt upon the inquiry, and deterring Christians from the study of unfulfilled prophecy. I think the subject is only beginning to be understood, and be-

lieve that the diligent and waiting students of God's word will, year by year, receive more light upon it.

There appear to be three marked features in the Old Testament accounts of this personage—kingly dominion, military prowess, and spiritual assumption. The same conjunction occurs in the beast of Rev. xiii., under which figure, I cannot doubt, this same personage is intended. Shorter, but equally significant notices of him, are given by Paul, in his epistles to the Thessalonians and Timothy. The king of Babylon said: "I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will be like the Most High:" the prince of Tyrus "set his heart as the heart of God:" the wilful king of Daniel shall "exalt himself, and magnify himself above every God, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods." Who can doubt that it is this same person of whom Paul says that he "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped: so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God?" In exact correspondence with this, it is said of the beast of Rev. xiii., that

"he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name;—and all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (v. 6, 8.) The beast of Rev. xvii. I believe to be the same person; the false prophet that is connected with the beast in the latter vision, answering to the beast that "had two horns like a lamb," in ch. xiii. There is a point of resemblance in the two visions of Daniel and John that I do not remember to have seen noticed by any of the numerous expositors of these visions. In Rev. xiii. there is an *image* made to the beast; "and as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed;" the beast has an image which is made an object of worship; the wilful king of Daniel does not regard any God, but magnifies himself above all; yet he too has a "strange god" whom his fathers knew not, whom he honours "with gold, and silver, and precious stones,—whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory." He exalts himself above all gods, yet has a god whom he makes glorious; this seems to agree with

an image which others were compelled to worship, while he paid homage to none.

The fall of this personage is, in the Old Testament, always connected with the final prosperity of Israel. The people of Israel are to take up their proverb against the king of Babylon, when the Lord shall give them rest from their sorrow and their fear. (Isa. xiv. 4.) After the fall of the prince of Tyrus, "there shall be no more a pricking brier to the house of Israel, nor any grieving thorn of all that are round about them." (Ezek. xxviii. 24.) When the yoke of the Assyrian is broken, as detailed in Isa. x., the glory of the latter day to Israel and to the whole earth, follows immediately in ch. xi. xii. And when the wilful king of Daniel "comes to his end," Michael shall stand up, the great prince that standeth for Daniel's people; and at that time they shall be delivered. (Dan. xi. 45, xii. 1.) In accordance with this, it is at the destruction of the beast and false prophet that the glorious reign of Christ and his saints commences. I throw out these hints chiefly with the view of inducing my readers diligently to study the subject in the Scriptures of truth.

Some students of prophecy entertain the opinion that the prophetic denunciations against Babylon, contained in various parts of Scripture, are to be fulfilled on the literal Babylon, which is again to be raised into a mighty kingdom. I do not think this at all probable If we had no example of the name of one country being used for another, when the latter resembled the former in its sins or its judgments, we might have more hesitation in saying that the name of Babylon may be applied to some other country; but as the prophet Isaiah applies the names of Sodom and Gomorrah to Israel (ch. i. 10), and we are told in Rev. xi. 8, of a city that is "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt," this is sufficient proof that it is conformable to the practice of Scripture to apply the names of countries, whose history and peculiarities are well known, as epithets to distinguish the moral or spiritual state of a people or nation that resembles them. And when we consider the origin, as well as the history of Babylon, no designation could be more appropriate to designate the spiritual rebellion, and wide-extended dominion, that are to characterise the dominant power of the latter day.

A short consideration of the origin of Babylon will make this more evident. I believe it is a mistake to suppose that the whole of mankind were engaged in the building of Babel, recorded in Gen. xi. Noah was then alive; and we cannot suppose that he was engaged in such an evil work. From what we learn in Scripture of patriarchal religion and government, we must suppose that he was at that time the priest and ruler of his descendants. It is therefore more natural to suppose, that the persons spoken of in this chapter, were some portion of his descendants, who rebelled against his authority, and set up an independent kingdom. The prophecy uttered by him, denouncing judgment on the posterity of Ham, and putting them into subjection to the posterity of his other sons, would necessarily sow the seeds of disunion among the descendants of Noah, and would naturally dispose the descendants of Ham to be jealous in asserting their independence. Accordingly we find, that Nimrod, the grandson of Ham, was the chief leader in the building of Babel*

* It is probable that some of the descendants of Shem were also engaged in this rebellious movement, Terah

(Gen. x. 10), the event being, according to a method very common in Scripture narration, briefly hinted at in chapter x., and more largely detailed in chapter xi. The sin of building this city and tower must have consisted in some such separation from the true worship of God, and attempt at universal sovereignty. That the enterprise then miraculously interrupted was afterwards resumed, and to a certain extent completed, is attested alike by sacred and profane history; and Babylon afterwards played a prominent part in the oppression of God's people. It is therefore not surprising that the name Babylon should be employed to denote, "spiritually," a power that should aim "to reach unto heaven," and, at the same time, persecute the saints of God.

Although I by no means agree with those who think that the Papal power is the last great Anti-christ, I cannot doubt, that Rome is

having dwelt in "Ur of the Chaldees." The instance of Melchizedek, "the priest of the Most High God," shows that the true religion was not then extinct. Some Jewish writers suppose Melchizedek to have been Shem.

in some way closely connected with this last form of evil. I think this conclusion is inevitable from Rev. xvii. The distinct allusion to a city situated on seven hills (Rev. xvii. 9, 18), applies exactly to Rome, and not at all to literal Babylon, which is situated on a dead level. I pretend to no complete understanding of the book of Revelation, and do not believe that such understanding of it has yet been vouchsafed to the church; but viewing its predictions in connection with those of the Old Testament, I think it not improbable that the Anti-christ will obtain the sovereignity of what was once the Roman empire; that in attaining to this sovereignty he may avail himself of the help of the Papal power; that having attained it, he, and those who act with him, will be the instruments of God's vengeance on her (Rev. xvii. 16, 17); and he and his followers will afterwards be destroyed at the coming of the Lord. (Rev. xix. 11—21.) But while I think that the woman who rides on the beast may mean Popery, I am disposed to think great Babylon, whose fall is related in ch. xviii., means something more than the Papacy, and includes the whole European

empire of Anti-christ, of which Rome may be the capital. And the reason why the beast, who is the eighth head of this empire, is not destroyed along with his dominions, may be, that he has at that very time gone up against "the land, that is brought back from the sword, even the mountains of Israel," where it has all along been prophesied that he is to fall. I by no means give this as a settled interpretation of these passages, but merely as appearing to me probable conjectures, from the measure of light we at present possess. I doubt not, that as the time draws near, more and more light on the subject will be obtained.

"Rejoice ye nations with His people," is the note of joyful triumph that always accompanies the fall of that last great enemy, of whom God "spake in old time by His servants, the prophets of Israel." This great and blessed subject, the glory of the latter days, occupies a prominent position in the word of God; it is interwoven, like a golden thread, in every promise, and is the period to which the faith of God's people is always directed. To this the eyes of patriarchs and prophets were conti-

nually turned. Jacob saw it in the abundant fertility of the earth that was to follow Shiloh's advent; Moses saw it, when he exclaimed: "Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee. O people saved by the Lord!" nay even Balaam, though his conscience told him that he should only behold this glory afar off, had a glimpse of it when he beheld the star of Jacob, that should afterwards have universal dominion. (Num. xxiv. 17—19.)

This crowning work of Messiah, this outward manifestation of His triumph in having delivered "the creation from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God," is the origin of that tradition of a happy time, of the return of a golden age, which is to be found, in some rude form, in every mythology with which we are acquainted. Men in all ages have felt that "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together;" and have therefore gladly cherished the idea of a better state of things. It would be an interesting task to trace this notion of "the restitution of all things," through all the distortions to which it has been subjected; but this task I leave to others, and

confine myself to the pure source of Divine inspiration.

Having already spoken of David's habitual contemplation of this glorious period, which he viewed in connection with that Son who was to sit upon his throne, I shall now proceed to examine a few out of the many passages in the prophets that speak of the glory of the latter days.

The following passage, which is given in an early vision of Isaiah, may be considered as a simple statement of the fact, that such a period of peace and blessedness awaits the earth; a fact which is afterwards taken up by the same and succeeding prophets, and adorned with all that a poetical imagination can furnish, to describe that which the seer is conscious far exceeds the most magnificent picture he can pourtray.

"It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say: "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of

Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Isaiah ii. 2—4.)

These features of universal peace and righteousness, and of Jerusalem as the metropolis of the renovated earth, are constantly repeated in subsequent prophecies. I have already noticed several of these, when speaking of Messiah sitting on the throne of His father David; and I have indicated various portions for the perusal of my readers. These I shall not again allude to, but bring forward a few of the most striking contained in the other prophets.

I have already directed the attention of my readers to the union of kindred subjects in one prophecy, though the events referred to may be widely separated in point of time. Such, for example, is the siege of Jerusalem; which is mentioned as one event, although there have

been two sieges already, and a third is evidently to come. In like manner the two dispersions of the Jews, and the first and second advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, are presented as single events. In a similar way, I believe, are the descriptions of the heavenly and earthly Jerusalem,—the metropolitan city of the Jews in the flesh, and the abode of the risen saints,—mingled together by Isaiah, Ezekiel, and John. The city seen by Isaiah (ch. lx.), agrees with that seen by John (Rev. xxi, xxii.), in its gates being open continually; in the kings of the earth bringing their glory and honour into it; in there being no more night, and the Lord being the light of it; while, at the same time it it clear, Isaiah must mean the earthly Jerusalem; because he says:—"Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations" (Isa. lx. 15.) Again, the city of Ezekiel resembles that of John, in its twelve gates having the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (Ezek. xlviii.; Rev. xxi.); in the "living waters," and in the trees whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. (Ezek. xlvii.; Rev. xxii.) Leaving

these parallelisms to the private examination of my readers, I shall proceed to the distinct statements of Daniel.

After mentioning four dominant kingdoms, that should successively sway the destinies of the world, the prophet speaks of a fifth kingdom, which shall endure for ever. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Dan. ii. 44.) The account of this everlasting kingdom is afterwards given more in detail: and also the period of its commencement, namely, at the destruction of the last great enemy. "I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages, shall serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion,

which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." The partners of Christ's throne are then mentioned. "I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given unto the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." (Dan. vii. 11—27.)

Such was the revelation of the Holy Spirit to Daniel; and such were the views of the "fifth monarchy men," from his days to those of our Lord. Let us see how far our Lord and His apostle tried to correct these "carnal notions" of Christ's kingdom.

John the Baptist came preaching: "Repent ye; for the kingdom of the heavens* is at

* *των ουρανων.* If the proper translation had always been given in the New Testament, the erroneous notions of a place called heaven, where the righteous are to *go*, instead of a heavenly kingdom that is to *come*, might in a great measure have been avoided.

hand." (Matt. iii. 2.) What kingdom could John mean, or what kingdom could the Jews understand him to mean, but the kingdom spoken of by Daniel, which "the God of heaven" was to set up? This "kingdom of heavens," or heavenly kingdom, was afterwards a constant theme of discourse with our Saviour and His disciples. That *they* expected a kingdom to be established on earth, is generally admitted; it therefore only remains to be seen whether our Lord endeavoured to disabuse them of this notion, and to inform them that the kingdom of the heavens was a certain locality in a distant region of space, to which their souls were to go at death, and their bodies at the resurrection. One thing must be conceded under either view. The kingdom of the heavens, be it when and where it may, is that state of future blessedness to which the hopes of the believers are directed.

In one of the earliest discourses our Saviour delivered, He said to the multitude: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." (Matt. v. 5.) This is what the Holy Spirit said by David, more than a thousand years before. The psalmist comforted the suffering and

oppressed with the prospect of a time when "the wicked shall not be; but the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." (Psa. xxxvii. 10, 11.) This is something very like the heavenly kingdom of Daniel that is to be established upon earth; and like that happy season spoken of by Isaiah, when men shall walk in the ways of the Lord, and violence shall be no more. I really think these "carnal Jews," that excite such indignation and contempt, had some very strong reasons for expecting a kingdom of peace and righteousness on earth. In the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, a long discourse of our Lord's, respecting this heavenly kingdom, is narrated. The parables therein recorded are familiar to my readers; I shall, therefore, only remind them, that when the multitude were dismissed, the disciples asked the meaning of the parable of the tares of the field. Here, then, is our Lord's plain statement respecting the heavenly kingdom; the mystery of which it was given to them to know without a parable. (Mark iv. 11.) "He that soweth the good seed is the son of man; the field is the world (κοσμος), the good seed are the children of the

kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, or dispensation (αιωνος); and the reapers are the angels. As, therefore, the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this dispensation (αιωνος). The son of man shall send forth his angels"—to do what? To carry away the children of the kingdom to some distant locality, and burn up the earth? No: "They shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." When the evil-doers are thus cut off, as the psalmist prophesied, "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." (Matt. xiii. 37—43.)

Now I would ask an unprejudiced reader, if any such could be found, whether there be any thing in this exposition of our Lord, to contradict the popular notion of that time, derived from the universal testimony of their prophets, that "the upright shall dwell in the earth, (אֶרֶץ) and the perfect shall remain in it; but the wicked shall be cut off from the earth

and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it"? (Prov. ii. 21, 22.) Is not the whole tenor of it strictly in accordance with this view; the wicked *gathered out*, and the righteous shining forth as the sun, in the heavenly kingdom?

As I write for Bible readers, and not for those who are too indolent to pursue an inquiry for themselves, I shall not, as I easily might, go through all the passages in the New Testament where the words, "the kingdom of the heavens," "the kingdom of God," occur, and shew, that they either mean this heavenly kingdom to be established upon earth, or are applied to the Church by anticipation. The mode in which it is spoken of conveys something very different from the modern notion of merely going away to live in some happy place. "I appoint unto you a kingdom." If these words mean any thing, (and who will dare to say that they do not?) they must mean something more than "You shall dwell in a glorious place called heaven." Joseph of Arimathea "waited for the kingdom of God." (Mark xv. 43.) If we *wait* for any thing, we expect it to *come*; not that we shall *go* to it. In like manner, the disciples and others

"thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear?" (Luke xix. 11.) Because they thought thus, our Lord gave them a parable to convey instruction on this subject. Now surely, if there were nothing but that "kingdom of God within them," that "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," which, from being the essential features of the kingdom, are figuratively called so—now was the time to disabuse them of their vain notions of a heavenly kingdom upon earth, and inculcate those ethereal views of the future abode of the righteous, which are so much in favour with modern divines. But does His parable do so? On the contrary, the notion of a kingdom is carefully retained; and the drift of the teaching is, that there was to be a time of waiting and of active obedience, among the servants of the nobleman, between the time of his going into a far country to receive his kingdom, and his return again after having obtained it. And on a subsequent occasion, when the disciples asked Him if He would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel, His answer was entirely confined to the question respecting the *time* of the kingdom's establishment, and in no way

discountenanced the expectation. And if our Lord had desired to confirm, instead of contradicting, their notion of the kingdom of God being established upon earth, what more unequivocal way could He have expressed it, than by teaching them to pray: "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"?

It will hardly be denied that the latter-day glory, so vividly pourtrayed by all the prophets, is the period to which the Holy Spirit directed the hopes of the Church, previous to the first advent of Christ. Our Lord and His apostles directed the hopes of the New Testament Church also to a specific period, when the troubles of God's people are to end, and their reward begin; this period is: The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in His glory to take unto Himself His great power and reign. Are these entirely different events, occurring at periods separated by more than 1,000 years from each other? So popular theology teaches. But does the revealed word of God so teach? While Isaiah says that God will create "new heavens and a new earth" (Isa. lv. 17), does Peter say: "We look for nothing so carnal;

we expect an ethereal heaven only:" or does he say: "We, according to His promise (by Isaiah) look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness?" (2 Peter iii. 13.) Daniel says that at the destruction of the fourth great Gentile empire, the dominion *under* the whole heavens shall be given to the saints of the Most High; that they shall take the kingdom and possess it for ever. In the vision seen by John, the elders declared that He who had redeemed them to God by His blood had made them "kings and priests." And did they disavow all participation in the kingdom of Daniel, by declaring that their kingdom is purely spiritual, or that it is situated in heaven? No; even before the throne of God they utter the same expectation, that draws down the wrath of modern theologians upon the carnal Jews, and the millenarians; they declare, "We shall reign on the earth." (Rev. v. 10.)

The objections usually brought against the perpetuity of the earth, and the saints returning to it as the scene of their triumph and enjoyment, are not founded on Scripture, but upon vague denunciations of "the absurdity of the

thing;" the "carnal notion of coming back to this world again," and the like cogent reasons. But even taking them on their own low ground, these assertions are untenable, by those, at least, who really believe in the resurrection of the body. It is no absurdity to maintain that a resurrection body that can be touched and handled, (John xx. 27, 28), shall dwell in a material habitation; the absurdity lies in conceiving of such a body perpetually floating about in some ethereal element. A material body must necessarily have a material dwelling-place. The truth is, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is a great incumbrance to the spiritualising theologians; they are conscious that their system would be much more consistent without it; that disembodied spirits would much better suit their ethereal and impalpable notions of the future state. This is the reason why the glorious doctrine of the resurrection of the body is so much lost sight of; so little insisted on by teachers of religion,—so little cared for by Christians in general. It is held as a dogma, but exercises no influence on the mind.

Other objections to the pre-millenial advent

of Christ turn on the overstrained application of single texts: such as "When Christ appears the second time, He will come with *all* His saints; but myriads of saints shall be born during the Millenium; therefore Christ shall not come till after the Millenium." Objections of this sort are really hardly worth the labour of answering. I believe many a man honestly thinks that Christ will not come till after the Millenium; but I do not believe any man thinks so on account of this text. It may be a convenient weapon to use against an opponent; but sure I am, no one was ever led from this text to the conviction that Christ's second advent must necessarily be post-millenial. Such an overstrained use of the word *all*, if applied to other portions of Scripture, would land many a worthy post-millenarian in conclusions from which he would shrink with horror. Christ will not come with saints who, at that time, have no existence; and yet He will come with a complete totality; a number that will never be added to—an entire body—even His mystical body THE CHURCH; which shall reign with Him over those "myriads of saints" whose existence

is a professed stumbling-block to some writers on prophecy.

Instead of dealing with what, however honestly urged, are in themselves little better than cavils at truth, and excuses for what is indefensible, I think it more profitable to endeavour to remove difficulties out of the way of those who are only anxious to come to the knowledge of the truth; without having adopted either side in the spirit of partizanship.

I have spoken separately of the different covenants made with Abraham, with Israel, and with David. I will now compare all three, that we may see wherein they resemble each other, and in what they differ.

In the covenant made with Abraham, there was promised a special seed, the Messiah; a national seed, Israel; and a territorial possession, the land of Canaan. All these promises were free and unconditional. "To thee will I give it." I profess not to be able to explain all that these promises included; but that they contained more than the mere annunciation that he was to be the progenitor of the Messiah is very clear. "In *thee*, and in thy

seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.". The inspired Apostle tells us that Abraham had a promise that he should be "the heir of the world." I do not pretend to explain this. It is probable we shall not fully understand it till we "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God." Enough has been revealed respecting the millenial glory, to make it an object of lively faith, and ardent hope; but not enough to gratify curiosity as to details. This is my reply to those who imagine they overturn every argument, in favour of the reign of Christ and His saints, by asking unanswerable questions as to how this is to be, and how that is to be, during the Millenium.

The covenant made with Israel at Sinai, though it also concerned the land of Israel, was, in other respects, very different from that made with Abraham. Its tenor was entirely conditional: "If ye will obey my voice,—if ye will walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments and do them,—*then* shall ye be to me a peculiar people." These conditions broken, they were to be driven out of the land, and scattered to the four winds of heaven.

It is really amazing how pious Bible readers should ever confound, as they do, the Israelites' occupation of the land by the uncertain tenure of the Sinai covenant, with the free gift, and perpetual possession of the land, promised to Abraham! The end of the Sinai covenant was to teach Israel, and through Israel the rest of the world, man's inability to obtain the blessing by the works of the law. The law was the school-master to bring them to Christ. The Sinai covenant was made the instrument of unfolding the priestly and mediatorial elements of the work of Messiah. The law, which was holy, and just, and good, evolved the sin that lurked in the heart of the fallen and corrupt creature; and sin called either for destruction, or atonement and mediation. Christianity, or the doctrine of the Messiah, is a consistent whole; if one part be rejected, the other cannot be really received; no fall—no redemption; no sinful nature—no Saviour; no guilt—no atonement. The whole of these multiplied services that are the derision of the sceptic and rationalist, were to convey reiterated instruction by symbols, respecting those truths which man is most concerned to know;

his own fallen and corrupt condition, and God's way of recovery through atoning sacrifice. These lessons had to be repeated to successive generations; and, in the existing state of society, and while the plan of Messiah's atonement was yet undeveloped, symbolic teaching was admirably adapted to arrest the attention, and impress the mind, of a people in an early stage of civilization. But now that the Messiah has come, we are no longer under a school-master; now that the work of atonement is complete, we no longer need the constant exhibition of symbols. The Sinai covenant, and all connected with it, was conditional and temporary; it has been broken, and is utterly done away with. (2 Cor. iii. 7, 11, 13.) The children of Israel are now suffering, nationally, the judgments consequent on the breach of the Sinai covenant. From it they have nothing to hope. Their future restoration to their land is not in virtue of anything promised at Sinai, but solely in virtue of God's covenant with Abraham.

The covenant made with David, of which I have spoken at length in pages 176—180 was, in substance, a further development of

the covenant with Abraham; and like it, was entirely unconditional. As the Sinai covenant unfolded the priestly elements of Messiah's work, the covenant with David developed the kingly portion. The subject of it is David's son, the Messiah, whose throne God promised to establish for ever. That the promises made to David had a first and partial reference to Solomon, is evident from the parallel passage in 2nd Samuel; but any attempt to confine this promise to Solomon, by insisting on the doubtful meaning of the word translated "for ever," which, in some other parts of scripture, is applied to a long, though limited period, is equally vain and dangerous; it is dangerous, because it tends to foster the absurd notion that everything denoting eternity may be got rid of in the same way; and vain, because even if the ambiguity of the word עולם in this case were admitted, we could not get rid of the perpetuity of this King and kingdom; because God says He will not "take away His mercy," and that the people "shall be moved no more." From the whole strain of the passage we should be disposed to conclude that "a greater than Solomon is here;" but this is rendered

abundantly evident by the reiteration of the same promise to the Messiah, uttered by the angel who announced his approaching birth: "The Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke i. 32, 33.) The covenant with David included the kingly office of Messiah; the perpetuity of His kingdom over Israel and all the earth; the happiness and prosperity of the Jewish people, and the blessedness of the nations. The last, it is true, is not expressly mentioned in the covenant with David: but in all the scriptures it is inseparably bound up with the prosperity of Israel; and David, in the joyful and triumphant psalms in which he celebrates the glorious future disclosed to him by this covenant, invariably joins them together. "O let the nations be glad:" "Sing unto the Lord all the earth;" "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands." Perhaps the best example of this that can be given is the forty-seventh Psalm, which connects the reign of Messiah over the earth, with "the excellency of Jacob," and "the people of the God of Abraham."

"O clap your hands, all ye people, shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the Lord most high is terrible; He is a great king over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet." The diligent Bible reader will remember many similar promises both to Israel and to the saints, of dominion over the nations. From the tenor of the context, we must suppose this subjection to consist in voluntary and loving obedience, not in servile abasement. "Ruling with a rod of iron," and "dashing in pieces," are mentioned elsewhere, it is true; but this is spoken of a temporary judgment, not of an abiding condition. "He shall choose our inheritance for us; the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah. God is gone up with a shout; the Lord with the sound of a trumpet. Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our king, sing praises. For God is the king of all the earth, sing ye praises with understanding. God reigneth over the nations;*

The word *heathen* is, in the mind of the generality of readers, so inseparably connected with worshippers of idols, that it is necessary to remind them that it is simply the Greek word for *nations*.

God sitteth upon the throne of His holiness. The princes of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham; for the shields of the earth belong unto God; he is greatly exalted."

It is not unusual, when attention is drawn to such a portion of scripture as this, and it is claimed as referring to the condition of the earth during the reign of Christ, to be met with this cavil: Is God not king of all the earth now? Is Christ not at this present time reigning over all things? Doubtless there is a sense in which this is true; but it is not true in the sense in which it is declared in these triumphant psalms. God reigns not now over a rejoicing, but over a groaning earth; an earth full of misery, oppression, and bloodshed; the dark places of which are full of the habitations of cruelty. When the kingdom of God shall come, His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. These declarations concerning the glorious reign of Christ do not mean such a dominion as He now has over hell, and over all things that exist; but refer to that peculiar sovereignty which was promised to Him as Messiah: "Ask of me, and I will give thee

the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Psa. ii. 8.) As God over all, blessed for ever, He had always universal dominion; but this peculiar dominion over the earth, to execute justice and judgment therein, is the inheritance specially bestowed upon Him, "because He is the Son of man" (John v. 27), the special reward of His having "poured out His soul unto death." (Isa. liii. 12.)

God called into being a perfect creation, and pronounced it "very good." Every thing was completely adapted to perform the function assigned to it; all were so fitly proportioned to each other, as to work together in perfect harmony, producing only good, only happiness. Is this the condition of creation now? No one will venture to say so. A very cursory observation is sufficient to convince us that all things "are out of joint." The larger portion of the world is yet ignorant of the true God, even by name; the next largest division is sunk in Mohammedan delusion; the next in magnitude is blinded by Romish superstition and ignorance. The moral and social condition of these three divisions of the human race need not be

pointed out. Then comes the small division of Protestant Christendom. Is the state of this division "very good"? View it either in the metropolis of the world,—this light-possessing, and light-diffusing London—or in some quiet village of the distant provinces, and say, whether the Millenium has commenced in either? Nay, is there a single church in Protestant Christendom, where the millenial glory has commenced? And if the church, the very garden of God, is still so defective, Oh! at what a hopeless distance from good does all else appear! But, blessed be God, we have a sure and certain hope that the creation shall be "delivered from the bondage of corruption" (Rom. viii. 21.); that "the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it" (Prov. ii. 22.); that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi. 11.) The glorious work of Messiah is to effect this change; "to establish the earth" (Isa. xlix. 8.); to undo the effects of the fall. Creation, and man, the original lord of creation, now groan beneath the blight of the curse; man's alienated heart leads him to flee from

the presence of God, and grovel in the dust from whence he was taken, and to which, for a time, he must return; but when the Messiah returns to complete His work, and enter on His glorious reign, "there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him; and they shall see His face, and His name shall be in their foreheads." (Rev. xxii. 3, 4.)

Such is the glorious hope that saves them who cherish it, from undue attachment to any thing belonging to this fallen, imperfect, fleeting, dispensation. We seek not the wealth or honours of this present evil age, because we have the promise of an "eternal inheritance." This inheritance has been purchased for us by our kinsman Redeemer; but He is not yet in actual possession of it: "We see not yet all things put under Him." (Heb. ii. 8.) But we are "sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." (Eph. i. 13, 14.) This incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, inheritance, is reserved for us in the heavens, but is "ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. i. 4, 5.), when the

holy city, the new Jerusalem, shall "come down from God, out of heaven." (Rev. xxi. 2.)

What a glorious prospect! A redeemed soul, delivered from even the thought of sin; a redeemed body, no longer dragging the soul back from its lofty aspirations; and a redeemed earth, radiant in all the beauty of Paradise. The pure river of the water of life shall make glad the city of God; and on its banks shall we rest with delight, taking sweet counsel with those we loved and lost here, and there have found for eternity; communing, not merely of the past, but of that "healing of the nations," (Rev. xxi. 24; xxii. 2), that subjugating of all things to Christ, which is to be the blissful work of the Lord and His Church during the millenial dispensation. (1 Cor. xv. 24—28.)

Some Christians, conscious that they have not given the prophetic Scriptures sufficient attention to entitle them to pronounce any opinion as to the truth or falsehood of the views I have endeavoured to set forth, content themselves with calling in question the usefulness of such investigations, "Why occupy men's minds with such speculations;" they

say, "is it not better to keep to the simple Gospel of Christ, which is profitable to all?" No one can reprobate more strongly than I do, a public teacher dwelling incessantly on prophetical subjects, to the exclusion of the fundamental principles of Christianity. These, doubtless, must be first taught, and first learnt. But must we always teach these, and nothing else? What says Paul to the Hebrews: "We have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." And does he praise this infantile state of the Church? Far from it. He says that, "every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe;" and therefore his counsel is; "leaving the beginnings of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection," (Heb. v. 11—13, vi. 1.) However well it may be from time to time to stir up the mind of the believer by a recurrence to first principles, it will not, surely, be maintained that he never requires any teaching

in advance of that which is absolutely needful to the unbeliever.

But these views of the real and true fulfilment of what God has declared in His word, concerning the work of Messiah, and the destiny of His people Israel, are not merely necessary to the believer, they are absolutely necessary to the thoughtful and inquiring unbeliever, whether Jew or Gentile. Besides stating that the Messiah should "make his soul an offering for sin," God has expressly declared that He should bring the earth into a condition of peace and blessedness, and the Jewish people into a state of glory and dominion. These were to be the effects of Messiah's coming. A large portion of the Christian community have been educated in a school where it is assumed as an axiom, that Jew means Christian, and Jerusalem the Church, and the land of Isreal means heaven, and Sion means heaven, and earth means heaven. All these propositions they feel no difficulty in assenting to. But the Jew and the infidel are not so easily satisfied. They not only declare such explanations to be absurd and nonsensical, but they conclude, not altogether without reason,

that, if such evasions are needful to explain one portion of the Scriptures, similar evasions must be employed in regard to the rest. In proving to my brethren, the Jews, that Jesus of Nazareth is the promised Messiah, I point out to them how He, at His first coming, literally fulfilled those prophecies that treat of His humiliation. Now those passages that we apply to Christ, and maintain that He literally fulfilled them, they apply figuratively to the Jewish nation; represented, they say, under the figure of an individual. If, then, I were only to present to them a figurative fulfilment of the latter portion of Messiah's work, how could I consistently rebut their figurative explanation of the former part? If the last be figuratively fulfilled, why not the first?

To the Church of Christ, to that small portion of the human race of whom Paul says, "Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil," (Heb. v. 14) I believe the doctrine of the coming kingdom is precisely the teaching that is most needed. Truth, and human nature are the same in all ages; but the temptations

and dangers by which they are assailed, vary with the outward circumstances, in which they are placed. Men are not now tempted to deny the faith of Christ through dread of bodily torture and death; nor is the truth of the Gospel now attacked in the open and blasphemous manner it was half a century ago; at least not in any literature intended for the eye of the educated classes. But we are not to suppose on that account that he, who was a liar and murderer from the beginning, is not now as busy as ever "going about seeking whom he may devour." As he cannot now cast the saints into prison (Rev. ii. 10.), he prepares other trials and temptations for them; trials well adapted to men in a state of civilization, to a church in a state of outward ease and prosperity.

All the various shades of natural character appear to arrange themselves into two distinct classes; those whose natural tendency is towards superstition, and that opposite class whose mental development tends towards infidelity. Although the one is more abundantly manifested in a state of ignorance and barbarism, and the other in a state of knowledge and civilization; yet the tendency to either lies

in the individual character; modified, of course, by circumstances. In the Church, as well in the world, these tendencies are distinctly perceptible. To each of these classes temptations are presented, adapted to their peculiar cast of mind. In an age of Christian and general knowledge, the superstitious element cannot be worked upon by the terrors that belonged to an ignorant age. Men are now tempted to carry the reverence due to what is in itself sacred, beyond its legitimate boundary; and to pay homage to the mere accidents of sacred things; to times, and places, and official persons. Like all deviations from the narrow path of truth, this leads into a maze of error. Those outward things that were at first venerated for their connection with that which is holy, soon come to the regarded as intrinsically holy; and being objects cognisable by the senses, form too powerful rivals to that which is invisible; and therefore come in time to engross to themselves that reverence and worship, which is due to God alone. Such was the origin and progress of that monstrous system of abuse, which we denominate the Papacy; evil and ambitious men being found in all ages ready to avail

themselves of human follies, and to build up error into a system.

I need not remind my readers of the "fantastic tricks," which this phase of superstition has of late years played in this country. Guided by that clever spirit who presides over all error, it has adapted itself to suit every taste. The weak and vain are caught by gaudy frippery, and official importance; the cultivated and intelligent by the charms of architecture, sculpture, and painting. It is melancholy, indeed, to behold talent and devotional feeling, perverted into instruments for the erection and support of an erroneous system, destructive to the souls of men! That is pre-eminently held up as an age of faith, when men vented their devout aspirations in offerings of wood and stone, in lofty cathedrals, and carved images; how can minds absorbed in the contemplation of such magnificent votive offerings, regard with any complacency the homely details that compose our modern thank-offerings, and efforts in our Master's service, the city Mission, and the Ragged school?

But it is not to what has been well named, the man-millinery of Tractarianism,—its copes

and its stoles,—to which it chiefly owes its progress; neither is it to its rood-screen or campanile; these are trifles that might soon be displaced by other trifles, if they were not allied, through the craft of cunning men, with something really important. Error is chiefly formidable when it presses truth into its service; when it avails itself of something in disputably true, and endeavours to attach something false as a necessary portion of it. The great bait by which Anglo-catholicism has caught her worthiest and most earnest votaries, has been, the unity of the Church. "Ought not the Church to be one?" she inquires. "Did not our Lord pray that it might be one; and shall we dare to say it can be split into fragments? Let us above all things dread schism, and separation from the Church, however faulty we conceive her present state to be. Let us retain all her pious usages, all her devout forms; let us shun carnal reasoning, and repose in faith on what the Church has always taught."

It is unnecessary to point out how directly this leads back to Rome; we have had many practical examples of this, and shall probably

have many more. Who can deny the Church of Christ ought to be one? But there are also other things it ought to be: It ought to be holy as God is holy, and pure as Christ is pure; it ought to possess the high powers originally conferred upon it; doing even greater works than Christ did, because He has gone to the Father. It ought to be "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." This is the *ideal* of the Christian Church; but it is not the state of the historical, the existing Church. The Church, like the Jews, is at present in a state of dispersion; individual souls are being gathered out of all nations. Notwithstanding outward differences, which are, I deny not, the fruit of sin and imperfection, there is yet a bond of brotherhood uniting all the true Church together. Whether the union will ever be more visible in this dispensation, I presume not to say. But the sure word of prophecy tells us, that yet a little while and the Church shall be one; a visible unity; one fold and one shepherd. "The general assembly and church of the Firstborn," now "written in heaven," shall then be manifested upon earth; shall then rule and

have dominion; shall then, as spiritual, and judging all things, demand and receive from the world that implicit obedience, that reverent submission, which the world will then know is its own best interest, as well as bounden duty. We, who live in the sure and certain hope of this glorious unity of the Church of Christ, cannot be caught by any of those childish imitations of unity, that mimicry of the Church triumphant, by which unstable souls are led to pay homage to stocks and stones. We cannot be content to play at a universal Church; pretending, like children, to believe persons and things to be what they are not; we confidently expect the glorious reality of the universal Church, and for this reality we wait.

It is curious to observe, in the history of the church's struggles, how frequently this true doctrine of unity, has, from a perverted interpretation, been made the instrument of oppression. From the days of Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, down to the papal mimicry of the millenial church and kingdom, compulsory means have been continually used to effect an outward unity. But has God ever shown that He set any store by outward

unity, that He cared for the most rigidly exact church order, when the spirit was wanting? Let us "go to His place which was in Shiloh," (Jer. vii. 22), to His temple at Jerusalem, and learn there what contempt He pours, not merely on places and forms, but even on His own appointed ordinances, if destitute of that spiritual life which they were appointed to convey: "Incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them." (Isa. i. 13, 14.) The modern doctrine is, that we are to have faith in the ordinance; that we are to believe the Spirit is and must be there. But will the Spirit dwell in a polluted shrine? The temple of Solomon, built by Divine command, stood entire and in all its splendour, when Ezekiel saw "the glory of the Lord depart from off the threshold of the house," and it "went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain." (Ezek. x. 18, xi. 23.) The second temple, adorned with "goodly stones," and the "gifts" of many

a pharisaical devotee, retained all its ordinances at the Pentecost that succeeded our Lord's resurrection; the morning and evening sacrifices blazed daily on the altar; the offerings of first-fruits were duly brought; the mint, the anise, and the cummin, were scrupulously tithed. The temple services were crowded by the children of Israel from distant quarters, "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Egypt, and strangers of Rome." If the Spirit of God were again to visit man, should we not look for His appearance here, amid the venerable ordinances of Divine appointment? But what was the fact? The "rushing mighty wind" swept disdainfully past the consecrated temple, and rested in the humble upper room, where a hundred and twenty poor and unknown individuals were met for prayer and supplication. Which of these two edifices was then the temple of God?

Truly, the teachers of religion need not preach up reverence for the outward. The natural tendency of the human mind is to bestow undue attention on the visible and the tangible; and our religious, as well as our

other feelings, are under the influence of this predisposition. On this account, the work of the reformer, in all ages, has been to protest against this tendency; to pour contempt, not merely on the inventions of man, but even upon things appointed by God Himself, if they become objects of special attention. The brazen serpent, which, if relics are to be venerated, might urge a strong claim, must be broken in pieces, and called *Nehushtan*, a mere piece of brass. (2 Kings xviii. 4.) In like manner, later reformers had to cry out: The water of baptism is nothing; the bread and wine of the Lord's supper, are nothing in themselves: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing."

The tendency to infidelity, which characterizes minds of a different class, is not in this country manifested in a way that attracts so much attention as the opposite error of which I have just spoken; yet I believe it is not less prevalent. It not only runs as a strong undercurrent among the lower classes of the population; but in the modified form of rationalism, it pervades a large portion of the most thinking and highly educated of the upper class — the

men of science and literature. Nay, more, I believe it eats, as doth a canker, into the minds of our students of theology; filling them with vain philosophy, and unsettling their minds on the cardinal doctrines of Christianity. For the infidelity of the present day is not like that of the old French school; infidelity itself now wears an air of piety; it condescends to acknowledge a sort of supreme god; who exists apart, wrapt up in his own perfections; neither troubling the said infidels nor any one else with his interference. Concerning this idol of their own imagination, they can occasionally talk in a very pious strain; and this sort of mystic deism passes with the unwary as a beautiful and spiritual kind of religion. Sometimes the rationalist will even speak of Christ in terms of such rapturous eulogy, that you would almost imagine he considered Him a divine being; but on nearer inquiry you find that he is only deifying the humanity of Christ; and in so doing, deifying all humanity; and thus, instead of viewing himself as a lost sinner, he struts about in all the pride of his own divinity.

Another form this Proteus-spirit takes, is

that of Pantheism. In this the idea of a personal God is lost in that of a diffused deity, a spirit pervading everything. The cant phrases of this sect, are, the True, the Good, and the Beautiful; and on these they ring the changes; not always with much clearness, or producing any certain sound, except one; and that is, man's irresponsibility. How can I, or any one, be accountable to a diffused essence, of which I partake, in common with all things? No; the true motto of Pantheism is — Every man his own God.

In all this there is an apeing of millennial glory and privilege. We, too, believe that God "will dwell in us, and walk in us;" and we have even now, "the earnest of the Spirit." But this is not the time of our glory, but of wrestling with a sinful nature, a deceitful world, and the god of this deceitful world. All things are not now holy and God-pervaded; but they shall be: "The bells of the horses shall be holiness unto the Lord." (Zech. xiv. 20.) When the curse is removed, all evil shall vanish; and the True, the Good, and the Beautiful shall reign triumphant.

I might proceed to show how political sys-

tems aim at doing the work of Messiah, in attempting to bring about a perfect organization of society; some relying for this result on the principle of authority and subordination; others on the social sympathies, and mutual co-operation. But this my readers can do for themselves. I do not wish to exhaust the subject; but to open it up for inquiry and meditation.

In conclusion, I would affectionately remind all the followers of Christ, that He has Himself predicted a time when the enemy of truth will be so subtle in his temptations, as to "deceive, if it were possible, the very elect." Such temptations must have a specious appearance of good in them; and they must be of a nature exactly suited to the condition of those to whom they are presented. The churchman boasts that his creeds and articles are a safeguard against infidelity and false doctrine. But where is his defence against Popery and formality? This is his weak side; and there he will be attacked. The Dissenter feels that his freedom from forms renders him invulnerable to the attacks of Popery; but infidelity in the form of rationalism, is a foe from

whom he has no defence but that of "taking unto himself the whole armour of God." I believe the hope and expectation of the coming kingdom is the best safeguard from all error. "Looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God," leads to "all holy conversation and godliness." Our hearts are fixed, trusting in the Lord; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and the nations rage. Yea, though we may see all things shaken around us, we shall not be afraid; but "look up, and lift up your heads, because our redemption draweth nigh." "The spirit and the bride say, Come. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

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